MARCH 1967

Commentary

VOLUME FORTY-THREE, NUMBER THREE

"BONN IS NOT WEIMAR":
Reflections on the Radical Right in Germany
WALTER LAQUEUR

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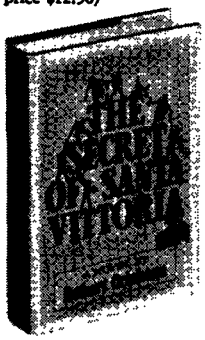

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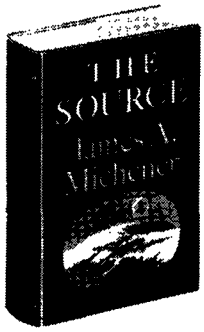

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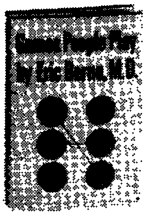

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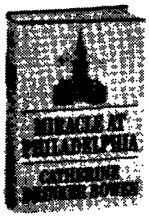

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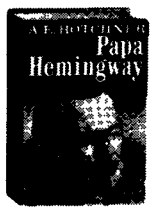

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Commentary

MARCH 1967
NUMBER 3
VOLUME 43

"Bonn Is Not Weimar"
Reflections on the Radical Right in Germany 33 WALTER LAQUEUR

On Albert Einstein 45 C. P. SNOW

A Story

Ball of Fire 57 MEYER LIBEN

A Washington Commentary

China, Russia & the U.S. 65 OSCAR GASS

In the Community

The Question of Survival 75 ROBERT ALTER

Observations

A Reply to Herbert Marcuse 83 NORMAN O. BROWN

Caveat Emptor Judaeus 84 CECIL ROTH

Satires 86 JACK RICHARDSON

Letters from Readers 6

Books in Review

The Jews of Silence, by Elie Wiesel 91 MAX HAYWARD

The Intellectual History of Europe, by Friedrich Heer 92 H. STUART HUGHES

I.E.: the Autobiography of Mickey Rooney, by Mickey Rooney 94 JOSEPH EPSTEIN

The Time of the Angels, by Iris Murdoch 97 ROBERT GARIS

Anger, and Beyond: the Negro Writer in the United States. Edited by Herbert Hill 100 JERVIS ANDERSON

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COMMENTARY is published monthly by the American Jewish Committee • Single copy 75¢; $8 a year; 3 years $19; 5 years $29 • Add $1 per year for foreign postage charge • Second class postage paid at New York, N.Y. and at additional mailing offices.

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EDITORIAL & BUSINESS OFFICES: 165 E. 56th St., New York 10022

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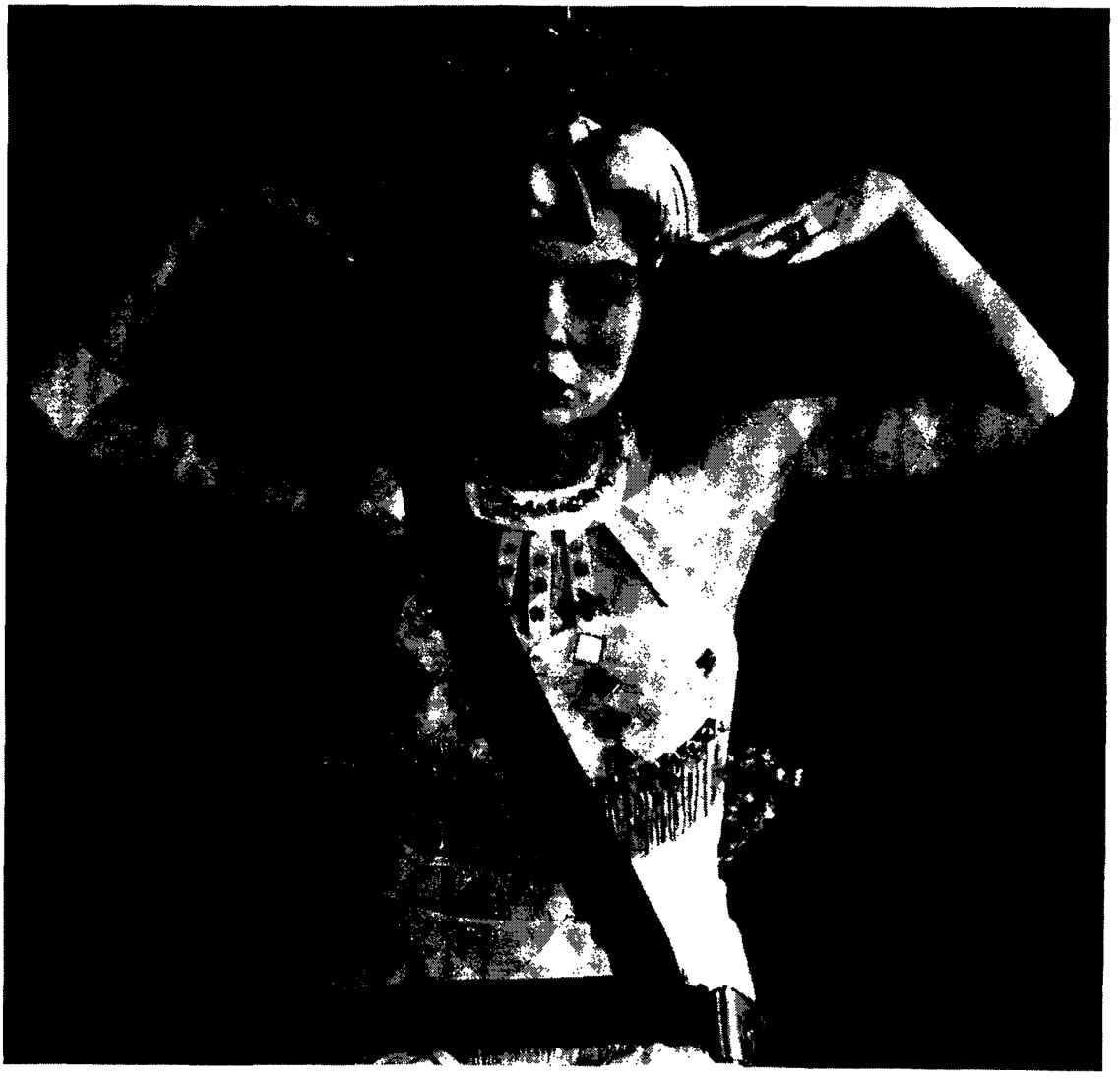

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On Wednesday, March 8th, the five winners of the 1967 National Book Awards will be announced in a presentation ceremony at Philharmonic Hall, Lincoln Center, in New York. Meanwhile, these are among the books by American authors published in the United States in 1966 which the judges regard as among the most distinguished:

fiction

LOUIS AUCHINCLOSS/The Embezzler/Houghton Mifflin
BERNARD MALAMUD/The Fixer/Farrar, Straus & Giroux
EDWIN O'CONNOR/All in the Family/Atlantic-Little, Brown
WALKER PERCY/The Last Gentleman/Farrar, Straus & Giroux
HARRY PETRAKIS/A Dream of Kings/David McKay
WILFRID SHEED/Office Politics/Farrar, Straus & Giroux
Judges: John Hutchens, Mark Schorer, Anthony West

poetry

JOHN ASHBERY/Rivers and Mountains/Holt, Rinehart & Winston
BARBARA HOWES/Looking Up at Leaves/Alfred A. Knopf
JAMES MERRILL/Nights and Days/Atheneum
MARIANNE MOORE/Tell Me, Tell Me/Viking Press
ADRIENNE RICH/Necessities of Life/W. W. Norton
WILLIAM JAY SMITH/The Tin Can and Other Poems/Delacorte Press—A Seymour Lawrence Book
Judges: W. H. Auden, James Dickey, Howard Nemerov

arts and letters

TRUMAN CAPOTE/In Cold Blood/Random House
JUSTIN KAPLAN/Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain/Simon and Schuster
OLIVER LARKIN/Daumier: A Man of His Time/McGraw-Hill
FREDERICK A. POTTLE/James Boswell: The Earlier Years/McGraw-Hill
ISAAC BASHEVIS SINGER/In My Father's Court/Farrar, Straus & Giroux
SUSAN SONTAG/Against Interpretation/Farrar, Straus & Giroux
LAWRENCE THOMPSON/Robert Frost: The Early Years/Holt, Rinehart & Winston
Judges: Saul Maloff, Lon Tinkle, Aileen Ward

history and biography

JAMES H. BILLINGTON/The Icon and the Axe: An Interpretive History of Russian Culture/Alfred A. Knopf
DAVID B. DAVIS/The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture/Cornell University Press
MARTIN DUBERMAN/James Russell Lowell/Houghton Mifflin
PETER GAY/The Enlightenment: An Interpretation/Alfred A. Knopf
BARRINGTON MOORE, JR./Social Origins of Dictatorship and Democracy/Beacon Press
PETER STANSKY and WILLIAM ABRAHAMS/Journey to the Frontier/Atlantic-Little, Brown
Judges: James MacGregor Burns, Leon Edel, C. Vann Woodward

science, philosophy and religion

HOWARD B. ADELMANN/Marcello Malpighi and the Evolution of Embryology/Cornell University Press
GEORGE and MURIEL BEADLE/The Language of Life/Doubleday
WASSILY W. LEONTIEF/Essays in Economics/Oxford University Press
OSCAR LEWIS/*La Vida*/Random House
PHILIP RIEFF/The Triumph of the Therapeutic: Uses of Faith After Freud/Harper & Row
ERWIN W. STRAUS/Phenomenological Psychology/Basic Books
Judges: Hannah Arendt, John Cogley, Gregory Vlastos

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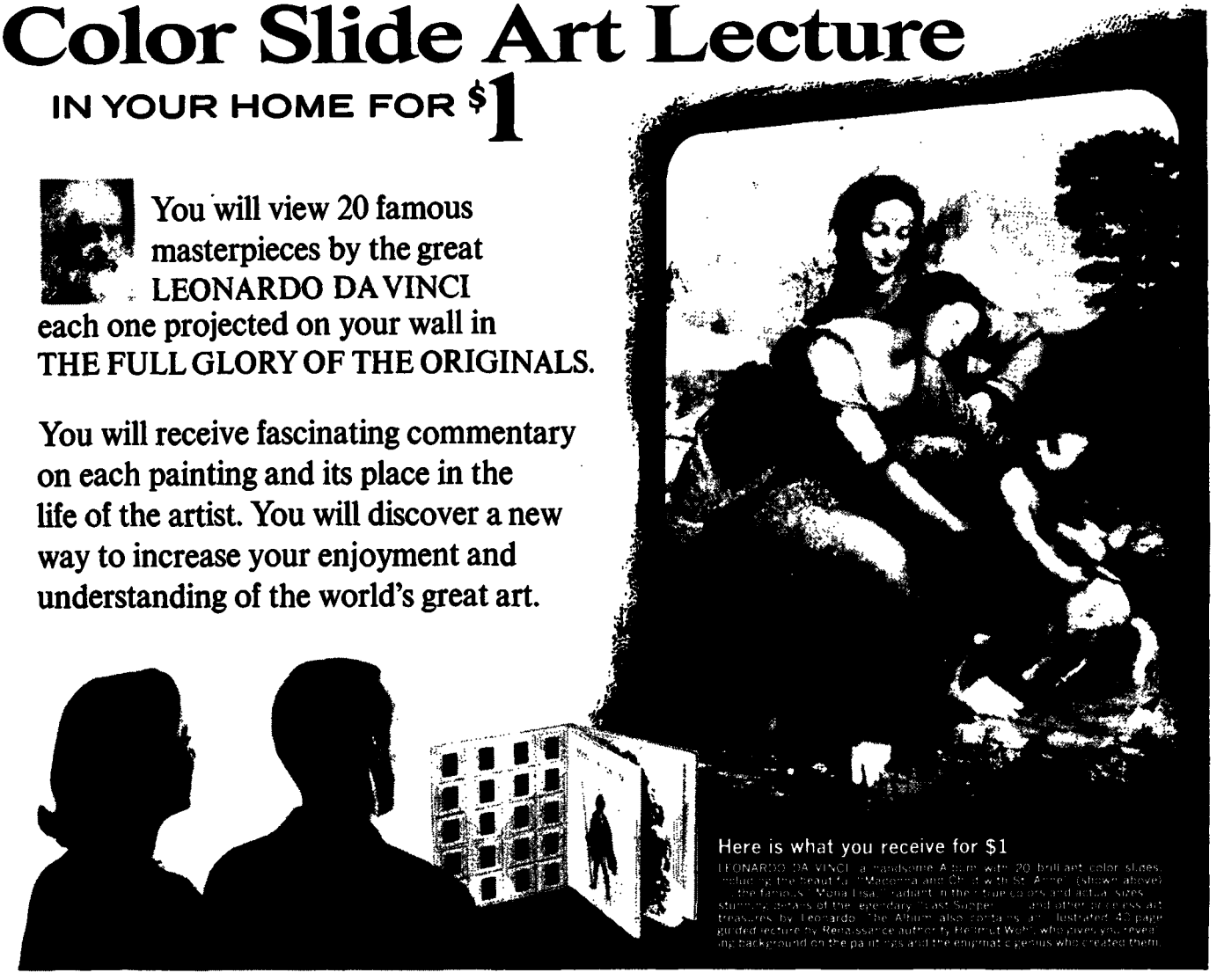

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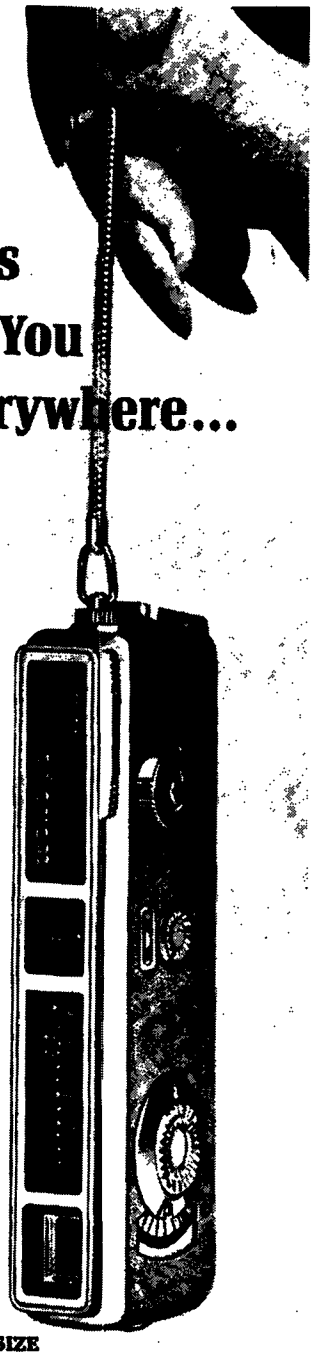

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Theater & Politics

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

It can hardly be a coincidence that the same issue of COMMENTARY (December 1966) features both Mr. Bentley's interesting if rather lengthy essay on the modern theater ["The Theater of Commitment"] and Mr. Richardson's brief but devastating comment on the New York production of *The Investigation* ["Auschwitz On Stage"]. Not having seen Weiss's play, I have to take his word for it that it is dreadful, and do so willingly. As for the way in which Weiss has handled the material of the Auschwitz trial—deleting references to the word "Jew" and casting all the blame on large impersonal factors not specific to any particular time or place—he is of course being faithful to the spirit, or ghost, of his departed master. Brecht's own anti-Hitler plays suffered from a similar willful blindness, except that in his case the taboo related to the word "German." The Third Reich (one was given to understand) was an obscene farce that might have been staged anywhere, and the Germans were simply unlucky in having it performed in their midst. Quite possibly, Brecht believed this. His Stalinism was both genuine and naive. There are fewer excuses for Weiss parodying Brecht thirty years later.

Mr. Bentley makes so many sound and important points about the drama in general, and Hochhuth's work in particular, that I trust I may be forgiven for raising a cavil or two about *The Deputy*. First, there is the matter of historical accuracy. Mr. Bentley evidently accepts (what is anyhow obvious from the published records) that the Vatican had decided to stay quiet while Hitler was engaged in his crusade against Bolshevism, and that this decision accounted for the strange behavior (as it must seem to non-Catholics) of Pius XII. But it is not altogether clear from his discussion of the subject whether he thinks the artistic value of the play depends upon its being close to the historical truth. I think it does, and I would argue that *The Deputy* derives whatever dramatic force it has (it is not, as we all know, a great work, but it does have some rhetorical power) from the manner in which it contrasts the claims made on behalf of the Catholic Church with the actual behavior of the hierarchy. In this context, the facile comparison with the war in Vietnam seems to me quite aberrant. No transcendental claims are made on behalf of the American Presidency, and it matters not a whit (to a dramatist) whether or not Mr. Johnson has exceeded his mandate. He is in any case mandated to drop bombs (though not necessarily on Hanoi), whereas Pius XII was supposed to have other things on his mind besides *Realpolitik*. I am bound to add that I have never encountered anyone who took seriously the notion of the Vatican as a moral authority, but that is beside the point: the claim is made on behalf of the Church by its official spokesmen, and its confrontation with the truth furnishes a legitimate theme of drama, just because (as Mr. Bentley notes) the theater has a moral role to play.

Then there is the matter of Hochhuth's spiritual descent from Schiller, and in particular the relationship of *The Deputy* to *Don Carlos*. I take it Mr. Bentley is not the alumnus of a German *Gymnasium*. Let me assure him that to schoolboys of the pre-Hitler age (and their parents too), Schiller's peculiar style of idealist rhetoric had already begun to sound hollow. Its ineffectiveness was indeed demonstrated in 1933 and the years following, but not (I would suggest to him) because the spectators misunderstood Schiller: they understood him only too well. His Carlos, and Hochhuth's Fontana, do indeed have something in common: namely the faculty of being totally unbelievable. No Philip ever confronted a Carlos (fancy a Spanish nobleman of the 16th century worrying about freedom of speech!), and Pius did not have to fear rebellious Jesuits lecturing him on the evils of Nazidom: there were none such in Rome, nor could there have been any. The truth about the Vatican is too awful for Hochhuth (who after all is not a realistic Catholic but a sentimental Lutheran) to face, and that is why he has had to invent the noble but incredible Fontana: much as Schiller salvaged his faith in the effectiveness of enlightened rhetoric by incarnating his own adolescent dreams in the figure of Posa. Faced with these tedious embodiments of the inveterate Ger-

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man hankering for an ideal realm in the clouds, one is almost tempted to forgive Brecht his cynicism. At least he did not pretend that the world is better than it is, or that tyrants can be ennobled by having sentimental courtiers wished upon them. As a dramatist, Hochhuth fails in the end just because, like Schiller, he refuses to face the full implications of the truth he has perceived. He might have done better had he taken Buechner for a model, but that is another story.

GEORGE LICHTHEIM
London, England

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Eric Bentley's article is exciting not only because it raises questions of the interaction of dramatic with human meaning, but also because it confers a quasi-religious status upon the contemporary theater. Especially in his closing paragraphs, the author suggests that the modern sense of outrage in the name of humanity finds its strongest, most authentic voice in the theater. He praises avant-garde playwrights and their audiences (often youthful) for turning their backs upon the mass media, the commercial criteria, the public-relations syndrome, and for seeking their humaneness in the "old-fashioned" but ever-reviving medium of actor-audience participation. He even paraphrases the New Testament by asserting that all genuine theatrical occasions strike telling blows against the evils of modern life, no matter on how small a scale, in fact, even when "two or three are gathered together."

In reading these opinions, one is not sure whether one smells the incense of the kingdom of heaven or the stale odor of a self-appointed elite. I think both smells are present, as they have always been in more conventional religion. It *is* the kingdom of heaven, to paraphrase Mr. Bentley's position, that a play like *Waiting for Godot* represents, in all its superficial squalor—the profound human dignity of two men honoring their part of an agreement to meet with a third. Their persistence in hope is their humaneness, showing all the more brightly in the murk of Un-response. But what does Mr. Bentley make of Ionesco's *The Chairs*? Here also are two old people, an aging husband and wife, who wait for an Honored Guest with a bright and most cheerful hope. When the Guest finally arrives, the old people swoon in a delirium of joy and fall into a kind of grotesque *Liebestod*. And the final scene shows the magnificent Stranger as a gibbering idiot who mouths deaf-mute inanities to a shocked audience. The theology implied in *The Chairs* points to an ultimate despair which Mr. Bentley himself observes to be quite inimical to the theater of commitment.

In *The Chairs*, Ionesco appears to have joined the coterie of that scornful modern intelligentsia which spits upon the common life. Here where two or three gather together they ruminate on the naivete and neurosis of the average man and thank their own intelligence that they are not as other men are. . . . This is essentially the Theater of Condescension in which the stage becomes a last little island . . . reserved for themselves by a self-appointed elite, in an ever-widening sea of chaos. It reflects an attitude which is not only misguided but satanic. Milton described it well when he saw Satan rising up slowly and scornfully from the initial shock of his plunge into hell.

How does one choose? How can we say that Beckett's tramps are the symbol of an ever-loving though highly embattled humanity, while Ionesco's derelict couple are the last gasp of an idiot race? It would be presumptuous for the audience or the critic to fix so final a judgment upon another human being. (There is some merit to the idea that God alone is our judge.) If such is the case, then the Theater of Commitment (or shall we call it the Theater of Outrage?), insofar as it advances toward ecclesiastical function, must take upon itself all the ambiguity of the Church. It risks being forced by its own self-righteous outrage into isolation from the common life, into all the loneliness of sophisticated scorn. Or, like the church in its better eras and moments, the theater, and especially the playwright and his actors, do not lose their love for the human story in all its heights and depths.

Beyond the mere fact of outrage, there is a far more important question. Are the writer and his producer and actors outraged at some men, or at humanity, or reality, or God? . . . A lot of mere outrage goes a very little way.

JOHN F. HAYWARD
Meadville Theological School
Chicago, Illinois

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Although the Theater of Commitment may be "the principal new

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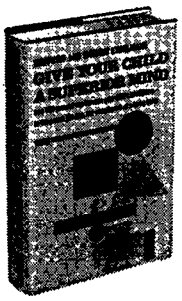

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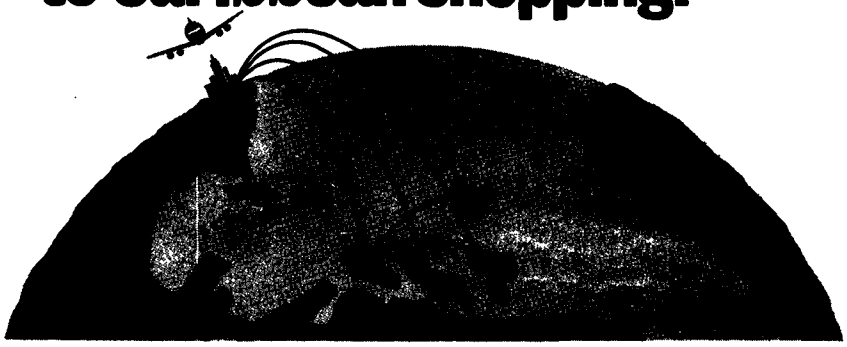

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presence in the drama of the 1960's," as Eric Bentley asserts, it is not a frequent one. . . . For Broadway in the 60's is the domain of the one-joke comedies of Neil Simon and of hit musicals adapted from hit plays. When a play is presented of content or controversy, it turns out to be an import from London which has run for one or two years and therefore also qualifies as a proven hit. Name *The Deputy, Marat-Sade,* and *The Investigation* and that's about it. Include off-Broadway and one can add *In White America* and *Viet Rock.* There may be a few more, since Europe has a way of making plays of commitment hits. . . .

Broadway refuses to face the fact that there is a new generation of university graduates which has tasted serious and meaningful theater. This is a vast audience which Broadway forfeits to the films of Fellini, Antonioni, Truffaut, Joe Losey, et al. It is an audience which makes a Broadway hit out of *Marat/Sade,* which throngs theaters throughout the country to see touring companies of *The Deputy.* I saw *Marat/Sade* play to an audience of 3,600 people in one of those huge auditoriums in the mud in Corrina, California, a twenty-mile trek from Los Angeles.

And in the Northridge Theater Guild in Los Angeles and at San Francisco State College, I saw audiences give standing ovations to *And People All Around,* a new play about the three civil-rights workers killed in Mississippi in the summer of '64. This play is the current selection of the American Playwrights Theater, which offers its 180 university and community theater affiliates new plays by established playwrights *before,* rather than after, they reach New York. I think that it is to such an organization and to serious and dedicated drama departments and resident groups that we must turn if we are to realize Mr. Bentley's Theater of Commitment.

S. H. BLECHER

Los Angeles, California

MR. BENTLEY writes:

Given the opportunity, Mr. Lichtheim could doubtless defend at length propositions which appear in his letter as pure assumptions and bare assertions. My excuse must be the same. In a retort for publication in your correspondence columns, there is only space to list points which I would be prepared to elaborate if given the opportunity. (1) Mr. Lichtheim's "will-

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ingness" to condemn a play sight unseen is not matter for the public record. (2) Peter Weiss is not a Brechtian playwright, except in certain rather superficial ways. The play Mr. Lichtheim is discussing, but has not seen, is even less Brechtian than *Marat/Sade*. (3) Brecht did not avoid the word "German." It is found many times in his dramatic and non-dramatic works. It is true that his view of Nazism did not take racial or national lines; even so, he was not above making specific criticisms of his fellow Germans. (4) If you say Brecht is *not* naive, Mr. Lichtheim will no doubt reply that *you* are naive. This has something to do with the character of the word, *naive,* or the character of Mr. Lichtheim's writing, or both. Suffice it here to say that by common standards, Brecht's endorsement of Stalin was the opposite of naive, as witness his book, *Me-ti,* or such a thing as his tragic poem about the liquidation of his mentor, Tretyakov. (5) On *Don Carlos,* I discount the opinion of schoolboys. I admire very much the scene in which Posa confronts Philip, and accept the anachronisms in it as I accept those in the history plays of Shakespeare and Shaw. (6) To Call Rolf Hochhuth "after all . . . a sentimental Lutheran" is nasty without being accurate. (7) Most important, the "facile comparison with the war in Vietnam." Mr. Lichtheim makes the facile assumption that the comparison made was between *Johnson* and Pius. What I wrote was: "Americans who give *carte blanche* to Presidents to wage unjust wars have no grounds for feeling superior to Pius." The merit of Hochhuth's character, Pius XII, is that he represents millions of persons now living. (8) Mr. Lichtheim says I haven't made it clear to him whether I consider the value of *The Deputy* to depend "upon its being close to the historical truth." What I think on this matter is expounded at some length in my essay. Let me here attempt only this brief summing-up: Historical plays always depart from the facts, and Hochhuth's Pius is not to be thought of as a rounded portrait of the actual human being. Obviously, however, the play would hold little interest for any of us if we thought it had nothing to do with what actually went on in those years. Whatever departures from *fact* the playwright makes, he also asks us to confirm the *truth*—even the historical truth—of his vision.

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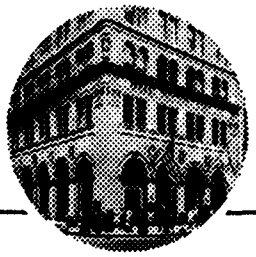

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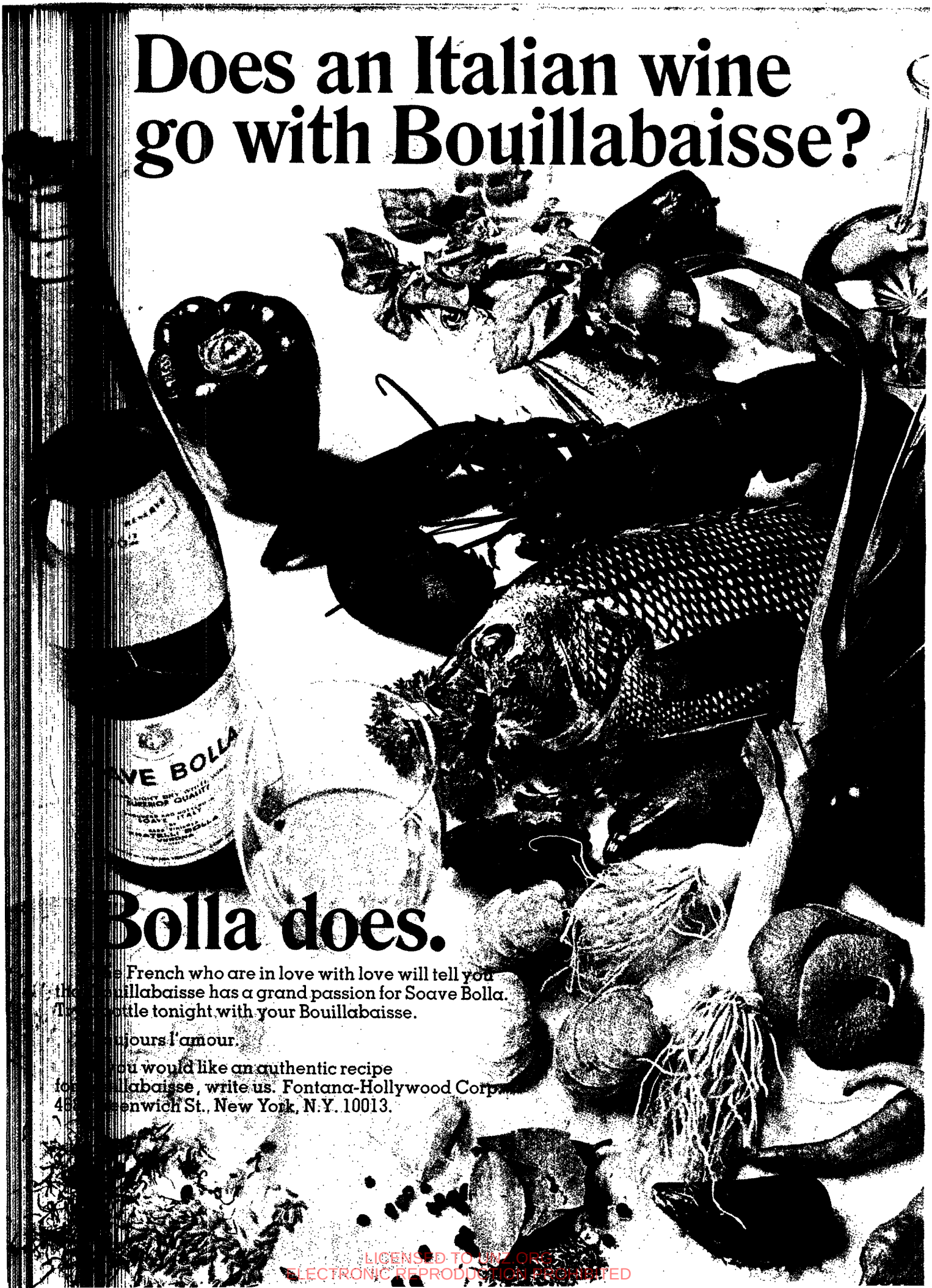

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After the Holocaust

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Gershom Scholem's . . . erudite diatribe . . . leaves one sad and sorely puzzled ["Jews and Germans," November 1966]. Professor Scholem declares at the outset that he does not count himself among those Jews who regard the German people as a "hopeless case; or at best as a people with whom, after what has happened, they want nothing to do. . . ." These are strange words indeed from one whom your biographical note describes as "generally considered to be the foremost Jewish scholar living today."

One can hear the distant sounds of *Deutschland Über Alles* as one reads, "Upon many of us the German language, our mother-tongue . . . has bestowed the gift of unforgettable experiences. . . ." In the end, the author convicts himself of being a German first and a Jew next—an old and chronic malady of the German Jew.

Professor Scholem says further: "The Germans have paid for their catastrophe with the division of their country," as though that were payment enough for the measured extermination of six million Jews. He then carefully . . . probes the present and future German-Jewish relationship by asking timidly, "Can there be a bridge, however shaky?" And further, "Is there not a light that burns in this darkness, the light of repentance?"

Unfortunately, the six million Jews who might have answered these questions are now silenced. As for those who can speak the answer must be an unequivocal "No," especially in light of recent political developments in Germany. . . .

LOU GREENSPAN
Beverly Hills, California

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . Gershom Scholem . . . has presented a brilliant and persuasive analysis of the dangers of a one-sided capitulation by a minority group to the culture of the majority. . . . I would like to suggest, however, that an analogy between the situation of the Jews in Germany and the United States is necessarily false.

Unlike Germany . . . with its long cultural history, the traditions of the United States are made up of the traditions of different immigrant groups. Assimilation as a concept is fundamental to the

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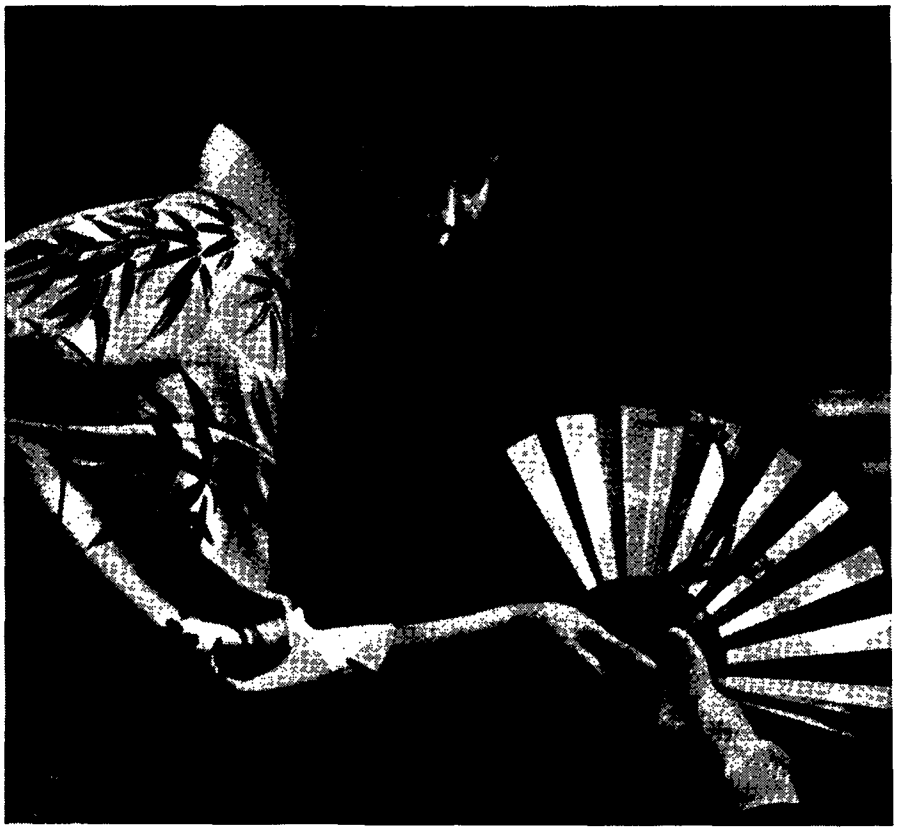

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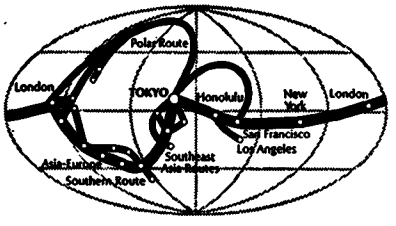

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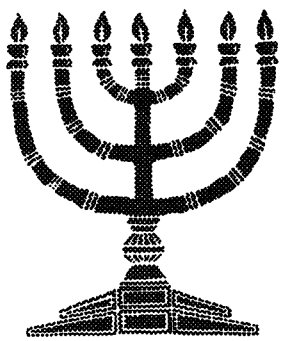

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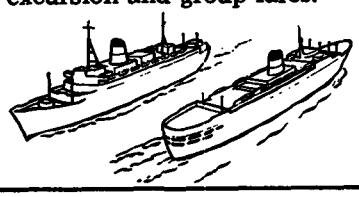

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whole idea of the "melting pot." Every immigrant group has, to a degree, bowed to the demand of American society that it give up some of its distinctive attributes, while retaining others. The American pluralistic vision, then, opens the way for at least a partial osmosis of all immigrant peoples . . . into a single society—something impossible in a more homogeneous nation like Germany.

JOAN GLUCKHAUF HAAHR
Bronx, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . The Germans are on the whole unregenerate and unrepentant. While some members of the younger generation indict their elders for the horrors they unleashed, most would rather that no mention be made of the forty million victims of the holocaust they created. We are told to forget the past, while they retain the myths of the Third Reich. . . .

In recent years more and more (ex) Nazis have emerged as state governors, judges, and other high ranking government officials. Some were elected under ultra-right-wing (neo-Nazi) auspices. Germany has exhibited a great preoccupation with nuclear warheads, jet fighters, submarines, and other accoutrements of military power. Indeed, it is possible that a good deal of the German unhappiness with Erhard stemmed from the quarrel over civilian *vs.* military control of German armed forces. Now, of course, a former Nazi, Kurt George Kiesinger, has replaced him as Chancellor.

In consideration of the above, it would be prudent to look before we leap.

If Gershom Scholem wishes to resume communications with the Germans, I wish him *naches*. Under the present circumstances, I think I'd rather talk to someone else.

MEYER SHOPKOW
New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

. . . A new page of German history began in 1946. The remnants of democrats and socialists took up where they had left off while the Nazis were stunned by absolute failure. . . . Their position will not be very auspicious if the progressive forces of the new Germany govern the country successfully and lead it into the family of peaceful nations. Germany today therefore deserves the goodwill of Jews in neighbor-

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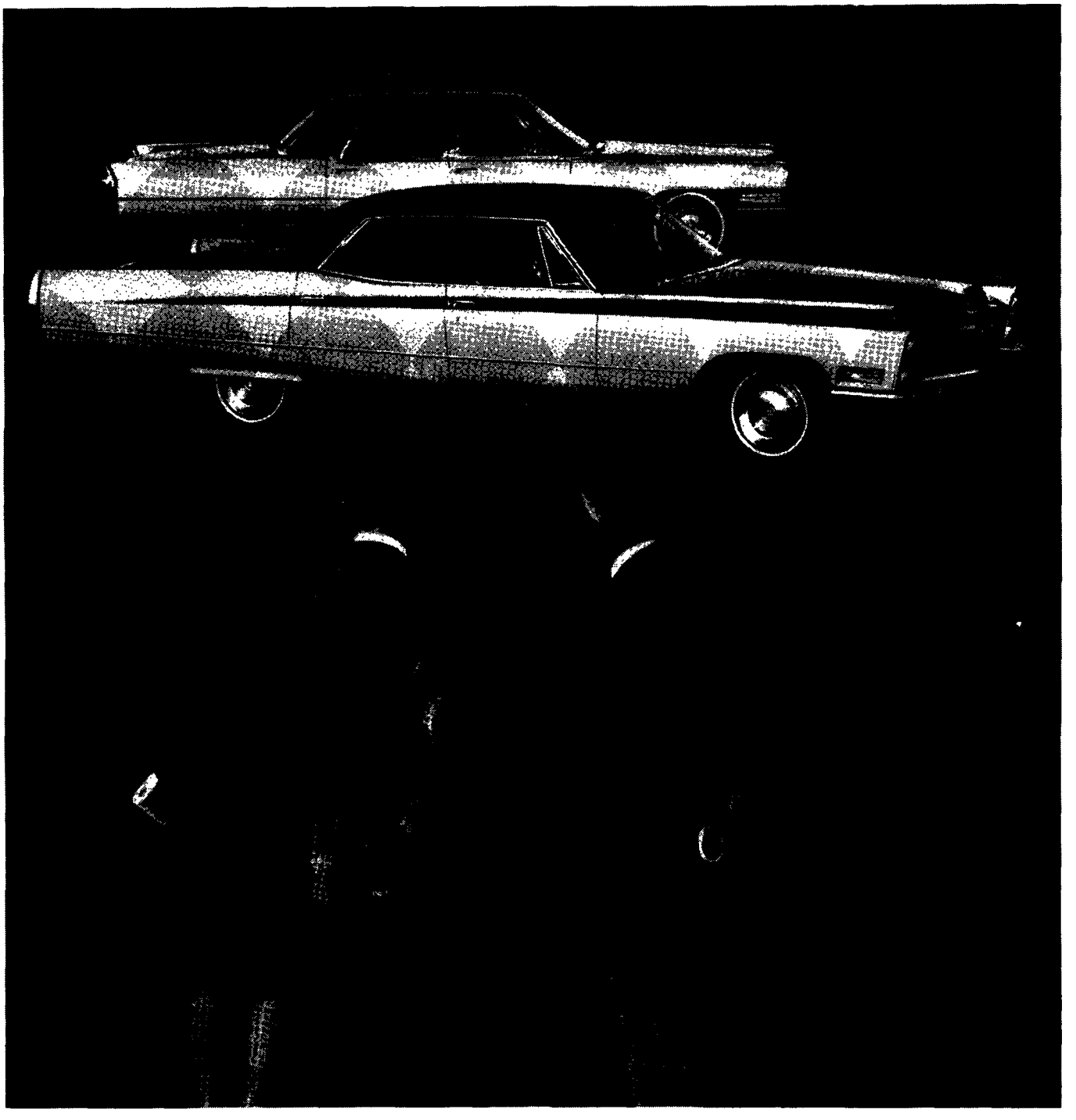

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ing countries, in Israel, the U.S. etc.

It has been the fashion to denigrate the Jews of prewar Germany. There were to be sure, devils as well as angels, but even Heinrich Heine rediscovered his Jewishness and for every Karl Marx we have to show an Albert Einstein and a Theodore Herzl and the latter's friend and sponsor—this seems to belong to Gershom Scholem's theme—the Grand-Duke Friedrich of Baden. . . .

Some Jewish communities have again grown on this soil, in part founded by Jews from Eastern Europe with but slender connections with the prewar institutions. They have the innate gift of forming a *kehila* and prayer services anywhere, at any time, and they did so right after their liberation from the concentration camps.

Formerly the Jewish tree of life had one root: orthodoxy; now it has two more: Israel and liberalism. Every one has its role to play in our concerted effort towards survival. What we need is tolerance. . . .

H. BLOCH

Munich, Germany

MR. SCHOLEM writes:

I find Mr. Greenspan's comments on my essay despicable.

Athens & Jerusalem

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In John Thompson's charming and diverting letter from a Greek Island ["The Vacancies of August, November 1966"], he states that there, in the 5th century, under the aegis of Athena, "law and reason were invented, for the first time something beyond the despotic passions of murderous fathers and murderous sons, and . . . all our ideas of justice, of truth. . . ."

Is there no one on the editorial staff of COMMENTARY who could have told Mr. Thompson that many centuries before those Greeks got such advanced ideas, Moses was promulgating the idea that even God, the Creator of us and our universe, is lawful, and was teaching, among many other laws, "Thou shalt not commit murder"; and that our other prophets went around harping on justice and the equality of men long before Homer smote his lyre singing the capriciousness of the gods and the murderousness of men? . . .

IRVING FINEMAN

Shaftsbury, Vermont

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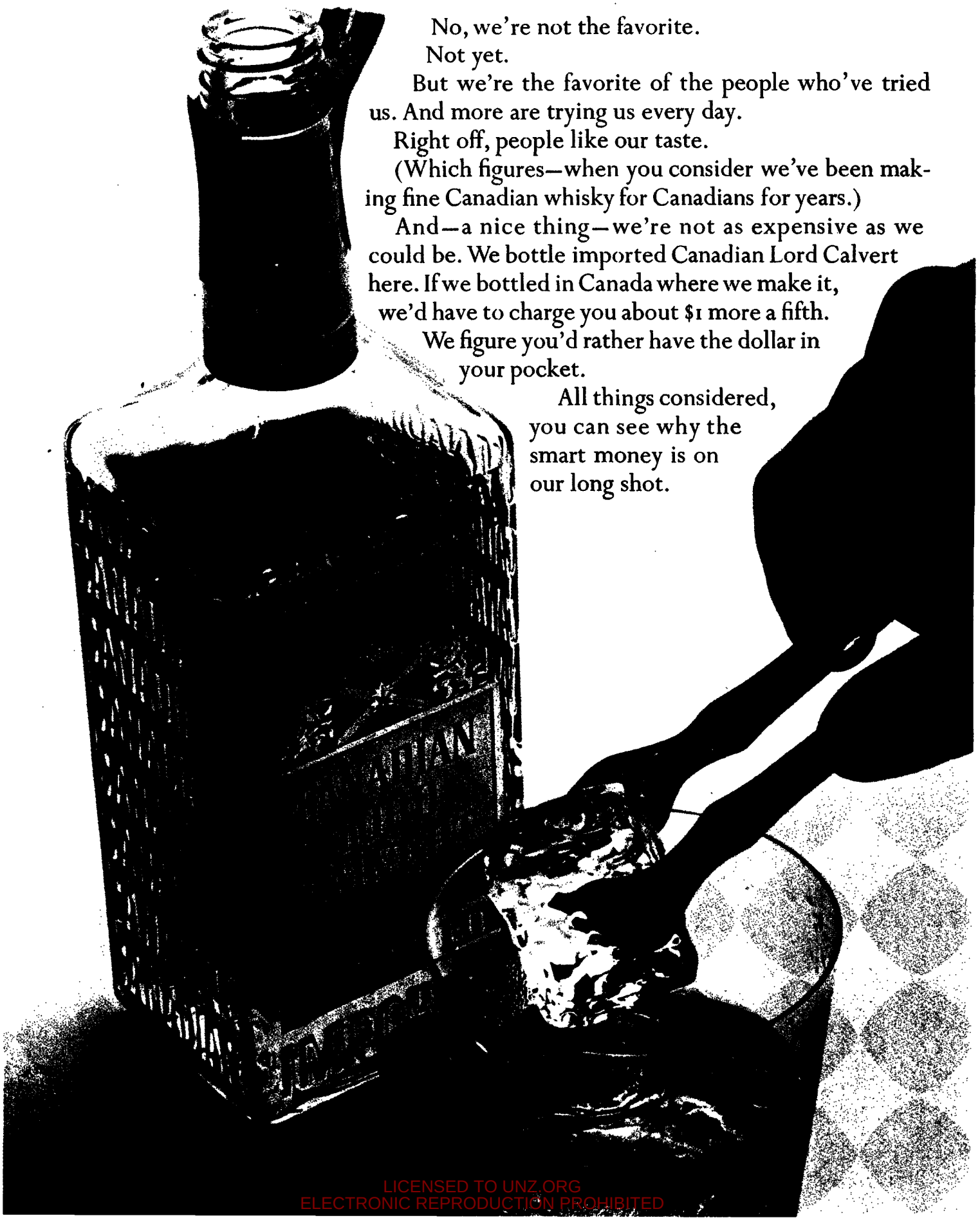
LONG SHOT.



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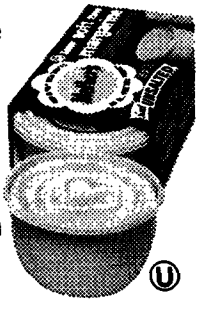

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MR. THOMPSON writes:

Yes, Moses indeed said that the Lord had many laws. But it was Job who asked if they were reasonable, and you know how far he got. Generally the biblical writers were too intelligent to put much stock in the notion that truth and justice could prevail in this world, or that reason was good for much. "For in much wisdom is much grief: and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow."

The Liberal Arts

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Eric Larrabee's article is splendid ["Saving the Humanities," December 1966]. Taking his final paragraph with tongue out-of-cheek, however, one might conclude that a Humanities Endowment, as much as an ACLS or a Modern Language Association, is unlikely "to be openly and passionately involved in turning back the tide of enforced specialization, subsidizing the training of effective generalists, shattering the sanctity of jealously-guarded department boundaries, strangling the Ph.D. octopus, punishing pointless research, abolishing tenure, lowering inflated salaries, and in general raising hell inside the halls of higher learning." In the hyper-organized interlocking world of the multiversity state, whose crosslisted bureaucracy Mr. Larrabee neatly (but very partially) documents, salvation is not to be expected from yet another cash-dispensing committee. Perhaps all the money in the foundation-multiversity-governmental sponge ought to be squeezed out and put instead into a guaranteed annual income—available to humanists and scholars as to butchers and bakers. A fellowship, in other words, with no pressure, no prestige, and no hypocrisy.

Is it possible, by the way, that university departments are so repressive and unimaginative because they are powerless, moneyless, and hence, in our society's ruthless terms, pointless? To get a grant or fellowship is to escape from their control, and ultimate success in academic life is to have a grant or fellowship (or a foundation post) all the time. Under these circumstances, what *can* one expect of our poor old departments? An organism seeks an identity; and the only identity open to them is a negative one. If you can't be anything else, you can at least be a prig.

HENRY EBEL
Middletown, Connecticut

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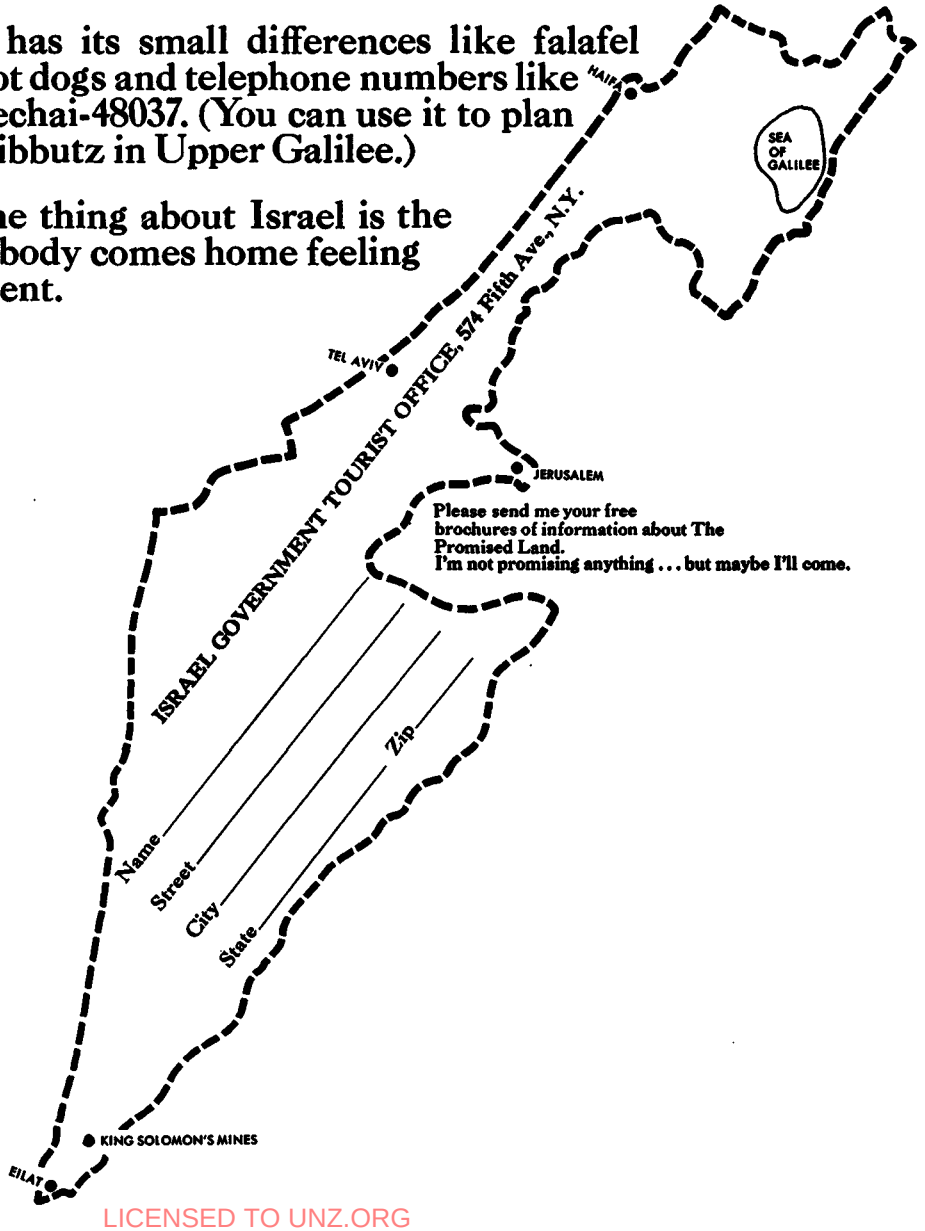

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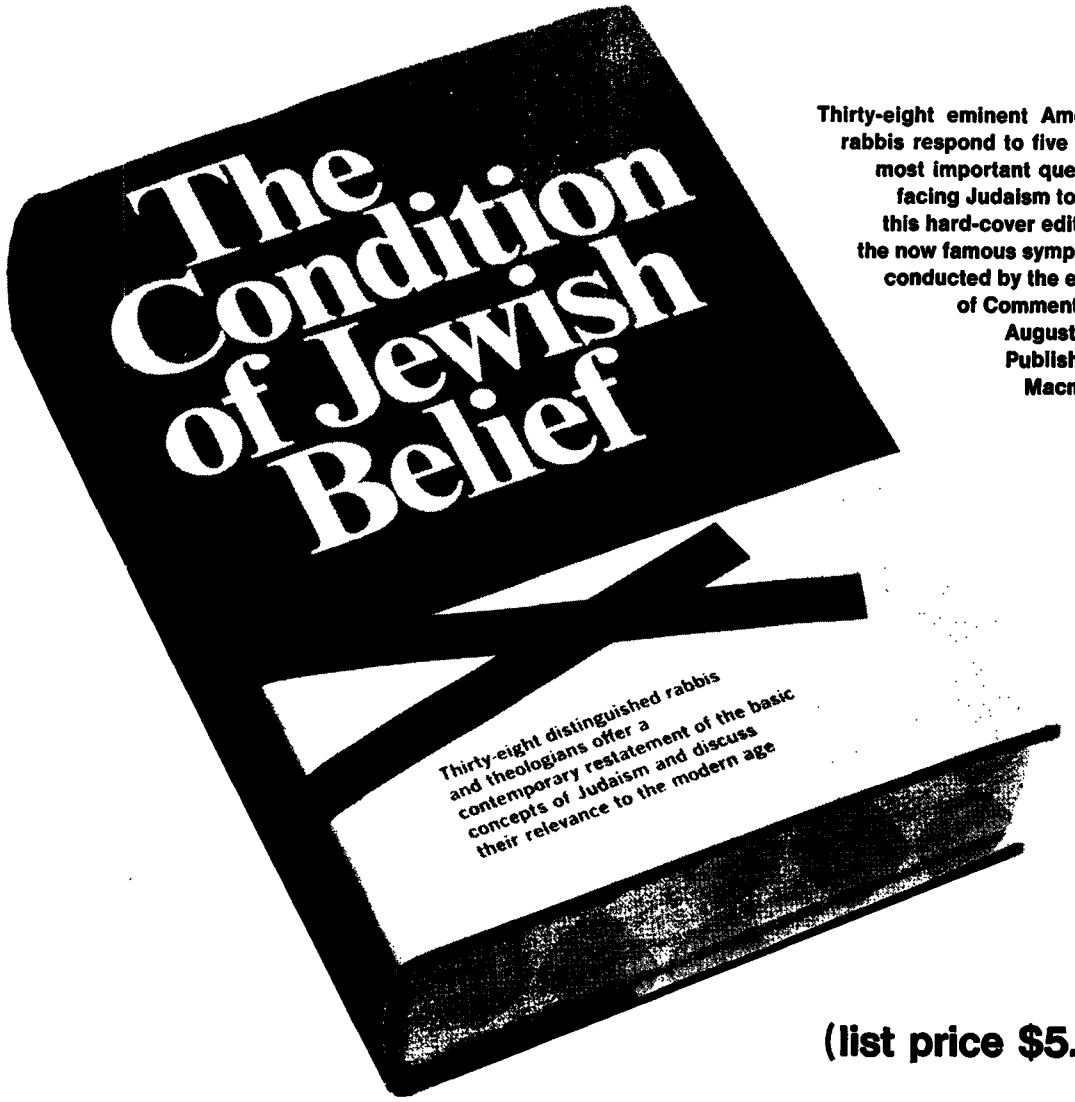

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To the Editor of Commentary:

Eric Larrabee's article brings to mind the recent controversy between F. R. Leavis and C. P. Snow. Snow's temporary departure from his own precincts for a foray into fiction was regarded not only as a breach of the disciplines, but of taste. That authenticity of one sort should be diverted into another province and for the sake of something other than scholarship was not just offensive; it was a transgression into a domain where the prerogatives are closely guarded and where in the opinion of the literary intellectual, the scientific intellectual was hardly qualified to intrude....

It is plain that the tremendous esteem won by the scientific community . . . has always rankled with the men of letters. . . . I have the impression that when the science *vs.* letters controversy receded, the universities looked over the field and discovered that the humanities departments were . . . in a stronger position than ever before. Courted overwhelmingly by thousands more students than they could accommodate, they stiffened their requirements (which is not unreasonable) but also began to rearrange curricula and to realign their intellectual stance so as to compete for eminence with the sciences.

Graduate study cannot be lightly undertaken today for just the M.A. It must, if the university is going to support the graduate programs in the manner which it deems intellectually fitting and economically profitable, include the Ph.D. When this issue was raised recently before a faculty member of a first-string university, he repiled with a *sub-rosa* sigh, "Because if a student does not specialize, he is considered a dilettante." . . .

All of this has produced the marvelously maladroit situation of the student applying to graduate admissions and asked to choose his field of specialization. He selects it and is told that it is closed. He indicates a second choice and is informed that it also is fully subscribed to. He goes down the line until the admissions assistant finally suggests, "Suppose we tell you what is *open*?" and from the one or two remaining possibilities, the student makes his last-ditch choice which has not the best affinity with his previous work or with his own predilections. But he has fulfilled this part of the requirement for admission—to specialize in something. . . .

Harriet Benais

New York City

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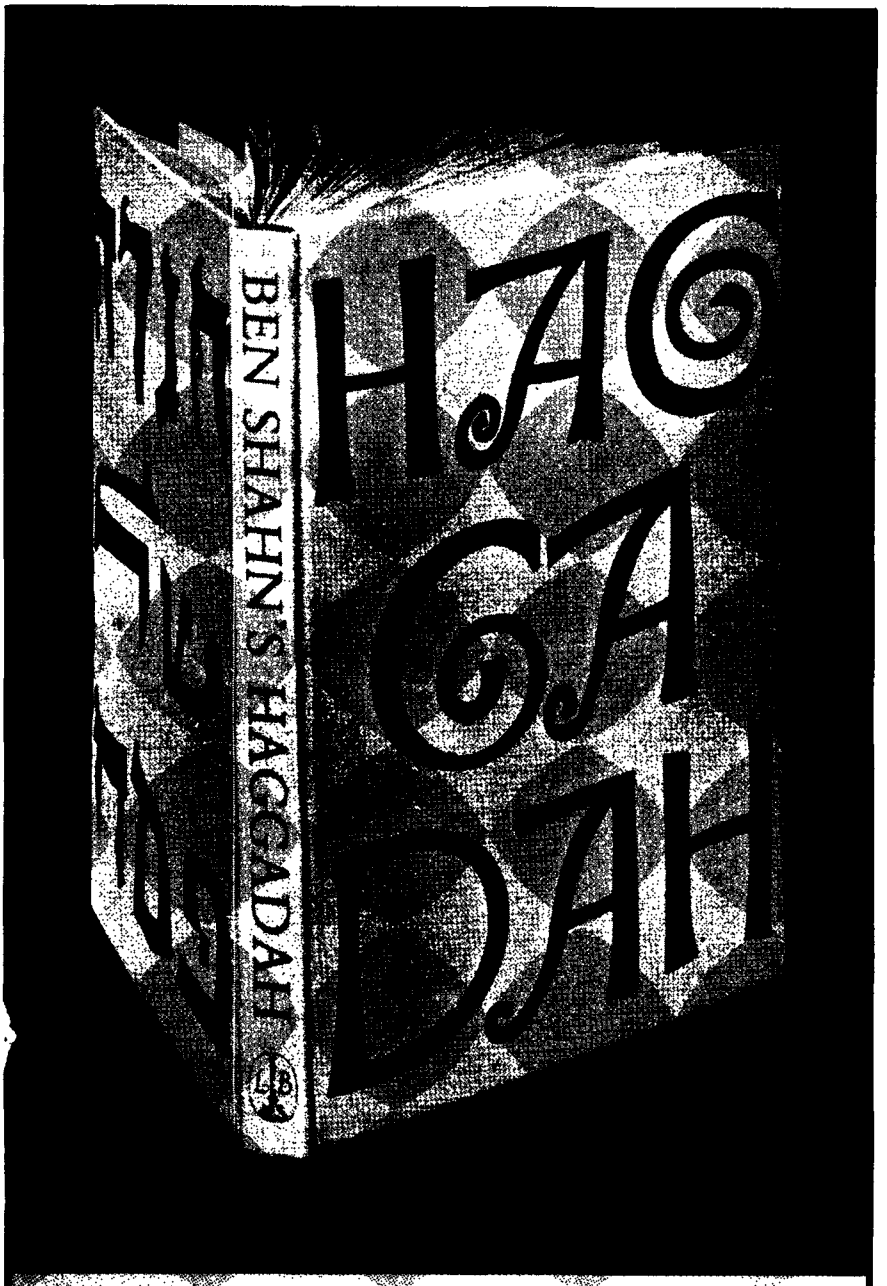

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Pro & Con

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

The lack of impact of *The Investigation* as a theater piece, in spite of the staggering emotional content of its subject was clearly described in Jack Richardson's review ["Auschwitz On Stage," December 1966]. . . .

In its failure, *The Investigation* demonstrates how time has blurred guilt, diluted memories, and detached us all. . . . As Mr. Richardson points out, . . . the play's attempt to leap into moral generalization by the device of eliminating proper nouns such as Jew and German from the text . . . contributes to the atmosphere of detachment and blunts the impact of the play's universal moral implications.

STANLEY LEFF

New York City

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

In Judaism we find the concept of remembrance, as in the injunction . . . "to remember Amalek." It is conceivable, however, that one should not remember in order to eternalize vengeance against the original atrocities. Man . . . must remember, rather, in either ambiguous or specific terms in order to educate against the recurrence of the animalistic instinct of mankind. Weiss's attempt to universalize the message of the Auschwitz trials is in keeping with this concept. Mr. Richardson's vague criticism imbued with wishy-washy doubt as to the point of such a play proves the need for writings of this nature.

ABRAHAM WAHRHAFTIG

Yeshiva University
New York City

The Human Condition

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Whether or not our society is essentially an empty one, as Paul Goodman maintains ["The Empty Society," November 1966], the fact remains that each individual within society bears ultimate responsibility for whatever emptiness or alienation exists within himself. In the last analysis, each human being stands painfully alone and separate in the universe, and he cannot pass the buck to society for his own failure to generate meaning and richness in his personal life. I am not disparaging the need for social criticism and change, nor am I unmindful of the fact that unless we achieve one particular social change —the abolition of the legalized form

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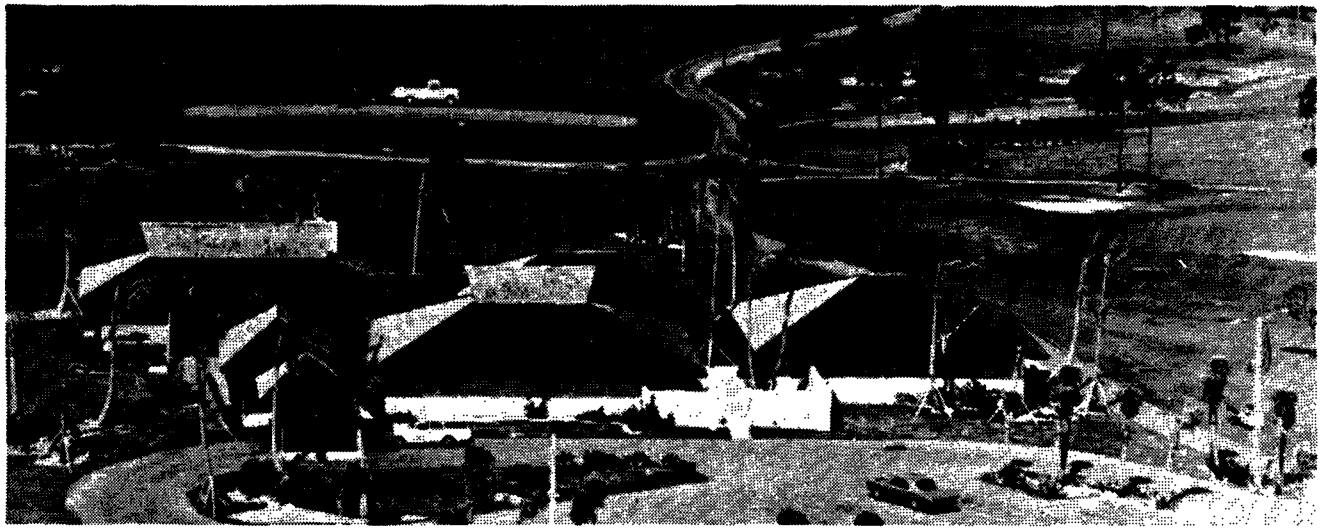

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of murder known as war—there will be no human beings left to exercise the awesome individual responsibility to which I refer. But it has become easy and fashionable to attribute personal inadequacy and personal irresponsibility to culturally induced alienation. I might add that Judaism, for all its social awareness, has never tolerated this kind of buck-passing. I hope that Paul Goodman's keen social sensitivity will not blind him to this point.

LEONARD J. ARONSON
Jericho, New York

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

Mr. Goodman's article was an interesting and perplexing one. The question he asks is the one we are eternally asking. We have no answers and neither does he. But Mr. Goodman does not bring close reasoning to bear on the subject, and probably for good reason. To do so would indict our liberal philosophy, of which he is a leading exponent. For is not America a result of several centuries of liberal thought? Are not freedom and equality great liberal ideas? And where else can one be *more* "free" and "equal"? Yet he indirectly damns them both for the evils which plague us! Are we to be "equal" if we don't all have a car, a TV, proper food, and an education? Yet he . . . deplores the corporate largeness which our own demands for material equality have created; and who knows better than he the results of universal and equal education? . . .

Mr. Goodman . . . sees that we are groping frantically for some reason to exist and senses that the problem is no longer in the material or intellectual realm (was it ever?). The great irony of it all is that our well intentioned-collective-scientific-liberal-reason has created the very spiritual emptiness that we now feel so intensely. Dostoevsky said it well: "Socialism is before all things the atheistic question—not to mount to Heaven from earth but to set up Heaven on earth." (And socialism is the largest "corporate largeness" which Mr. Goodman hates.)

What is to be done? It seems impossible to find that "Heaven on earth." And God in Heaven is dead. Does Mr. Goodman think a little tyranny would help us recapture that lost spirit, that dead God? Maybe it would, but isn't tyranny anathema to a liberal? How can we believe in two opposite

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things at one time? The truth is, one can no longer be both a reasoning man and a liberal, without being phony. Could it be that in America, reason has been given up in favor of liberalism because of an innate desire not to be phony? If so, a lot of strange social phenomena in our society could be explained. Instead, maybe we should give up this idea of being "free and equal," as Mr. Goodman seems to have done, although it is true that he slips back and forth . . . between reason and liberalism even within the space of his short article. For how else could he want freedom and equality for the Negroes or the Puerto Ricans and at the same time assert that a little tyranny would help us, or that inequality of education would improve its quality? Mr. Goodman's convictions seem to be at odds with his intellect.

JAMES R. STONE
Grand Forks, New Jersey

MR. GOODMAN writes:

I am at a loss to reply to either of these correspondents, who seem to be carrying on an interior dialogue touched off by something I said or they thought I said. Let me join in by adding a couple of musings of my own.

For Mr. Aronson: It may be fashionable but it is not easy to "attribute personal inadequacy to culturally-induced," etc. If we could really hit the many middle terms of this connection, we would all do better in political persuasion, pedagogy, psychotherapy, social work, and so forth, for we could then set up situations in which intrinsic ("personal") action could occur. Certainly, without the spontaneous motion of souls there is no justice, learning, health, regeneration, and so forth. But how do you get that spontaneous motion? By willing it? By moral lectures? I guess it is by Grace; and the classical way of "earning" Grace is by working at changing the social conditions. I do work at it, though this way may be all wrong. And we must also look at it another way: people are responsible where they have opportunity and power. We who are socially responsible are so *noblesse oblige,* being bright, having time and options, etc.; and a work of responsibility, therefore, is to make bright, to give time and options, etc.

For Mr. Stone: First, I am puzzled at how I could mean, in anybody's mind, that "a little tyranny would help." On "inequality of education" Mr. Stone simply misunderstands me; he thinks that "schooling" is synonymous with "education," whereas for most (including most of the bright), I think it is a poor method. But let me say something about equality as such. I do not think it is, historically, a liberal slogan. Interested in liberty and social self-regulation, liberals have asked only for equality before the law, equality in liberties, and equality of opportunity. For the sake of commonwealth and justice, I would also guarantee universal decency, classically a conservative tenet; anyway, without universal decency there is no equality of opportunity. Politically, I am not a socialist.

Yet there is an aesthetic charm and ethical simplicity to socialism; it shakes down many inessential differences and wearisome competition, and under modern urban and technological conditions it is perhaps the best approximation to rural quiet. Trouble is, it's too dangerous.

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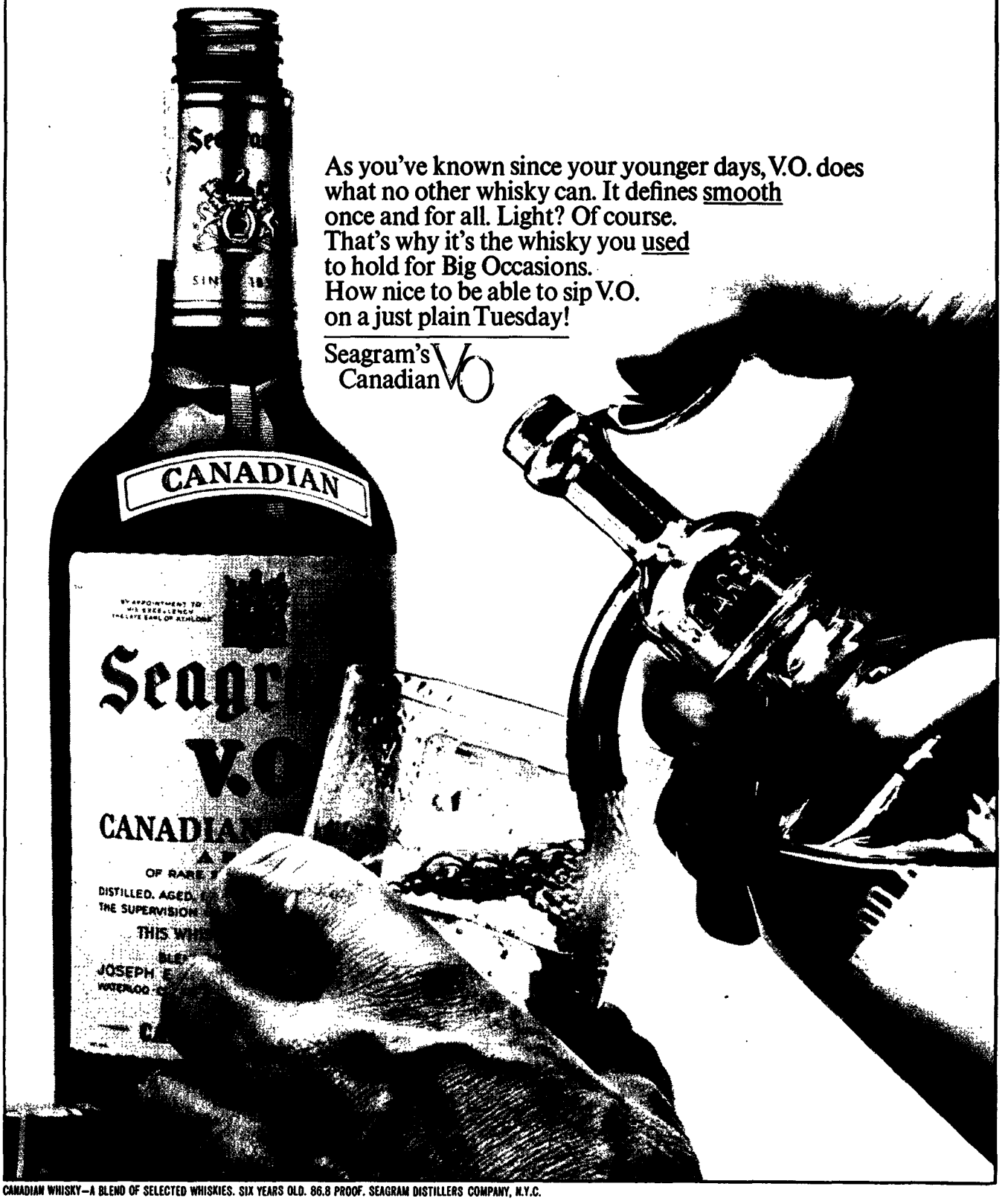

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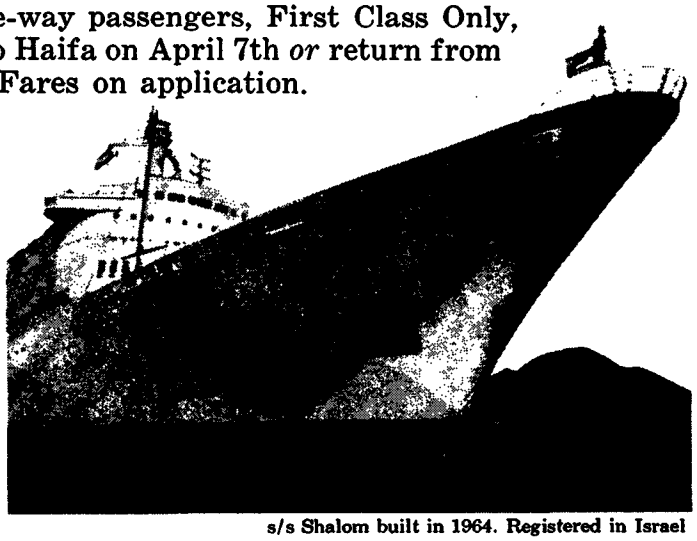

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"BONN IS NOT WEIMAR"

Reflections on the Radical Right in Germany

WALTER LAQUEUR

CHRISTMAS EVE *in a West German city. The rain has been falling steadily for days; soon it will turn into snow. Last-minute shoppers hurry home with their gift parcels. Enormous Christmas trees are displayed in the shop windows, also shepherds and cribs, tinsel angels with clouds of silvery hair. The main roads are illuminated, the trolleybuses overflow, and it is difficult to find a taxi. People gather in front of the church, where a choir is singing the song of the fir tree,* O Tannenbaum. *At the nearby university, students are demonstrating against the war in Vietnam.*

A meeting of the National Democrats has been announced for that evening; it is to be addressed by the deputy leader. There is a great deal of curiosity in the air. In the big hall there are perhaps two thousand people; a few hundred who could not find seats have to remain outside. The deputy leader arrives, there is some applause, but not very much; about half the audience seems to be hostile, or at any rate passive. He clears his throat and begins to speak. The deputy leader is quite good-looking, immaculately dressed; he bears a vague resemblance to one of Germany's leading film stars. But he has aged in recent years and there is little of that boyish charm which fifteen years ago made his fellow members of the Bundestag call him, somewhat derisively, "Bubi."

The tenor of the speech is serious; he does not tell jokes, and barely indulges in sarcasm. He finds it difficult to make an impact on the audience, remains cold and quite remote. Only toward the end does the deputy leader warm up a bit: We are not Nazis, he claims, that is a base calumny. The National Socialist party was the creation of one man, Adolf Hitler; his movement disappeared together with him. Nor are we obscurantists, backwoods men, as our enemies so often claim. We are open to all new influences, weltoffen. *We are not anti-democratic, we simply want to make democracy work, we want to do away with the excesses and shortcomings of what amounts to a party dictatorship in Bonn. We want a united Europe. But we also want to be treated as what we are—a great people in the heart of Europe, not a nation of criminals. An independent German policy is overdue, we ought to put our own interests first.*

He goes on for a few more minutes about the need for a sensible economic policy. He does not mention Jews in his speech, and says very little about Russia and Communism. He ends with a forecast: the party will go from strength to strength; we had never expected to do as well as we did in Hesse and Bavaria. Deep among the people there is a growing wish for change—and we now constitute the only alternative.

Then, rather abruptly, it is all over. No singing of patriotic songs or hymns, no shouts of Heil! *Quietly, the audience disperses, while some of the party stalwarts peddle their newssheet,* Deutsche Nachrichten. *It is all very orderly and unexcited. There had been some heckling during the speech, but the ushers had been given strict instructions not to intervene.*

THIS, THEN, *is the great national upsurge. What a contrast with another upsurge I had witnessed in this same country as a boy. My earliest political memory is of listening on the wireless to the results of the 1930 elections in which the Nazis emerged as the second strongest party. This was at a time when thousands of unemployed people were demonstrating, when street brawls and political murder occurred every weekend. It was the age of Hitler and Goebbels, of monster rallies, of electrifying speeches and wild mobs. It was a period of frenzied clamor, of* Deutschland Erwache! *and* Juda Verreckel, *of shots in dark alleys and the sirens of police cars, a time when political enemies were trampled to death, and uniformed gangs terrorized passersby. It was, in other words, an era quite different from the present; whoever lived through those years cannot help but regard this latter-day-revival—if it is a revival —as an anticlimax. The demagogy is subdued; the crowds are passive; there may be resentment but there is no enthusiasm. A large part of the crowd had come to listen to the speaker out of plain curiosity—next time they will watch on television. But on television the National Democrats, like McCarthy, do not look good. True, Hitler, Goebbels, and Goering were greatly underrated in 1930. And yet, for all that, the overwhelming im-*

WALTER LAQUEUR, a frequent contributor, is director of the Institute of Contemporary History (The Wiener Library) in London. He is at present teaching at the Center for the History of Ideas at Brandeis.

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pression, as one observer has put it, is that these people will not set the Rhine on fire, let alone the Reichstag.

Outside their meetings, the National Democrats are not easy to locate. A Cologne sociologist told me the following story: Together with a small group of people, he had gone to a remote little village in Hesse, in which 53 per cent of the population had recently voted for the National Democrats. For two days they had interviewed practically every inhabitant, but no one admitted having voted for the NPD. The peasants had given expression to their resentment in the elections, but they also felt embarrassed about it.

But then one does occasionally meet a member of the NPD in the most unlikely of places. Walking in the street one day, I saw a man who looked vaguely familiar. He introduced himself. I had known Hirsch (as I shall call him) when we went to the same school; I had not heard from him since. He was a "half Jew" according to the Nuremberg laws. Soon he began to tell me his life story: how he had served in the German army for a while, but—as a "Non-Aryan"—was transferred to a labor battalion in 1940; how he barely survived the war and the persecutions, but lost his parents. Yet, despite his personal misfortunes and all he had suffered under Hitler, he had preserved his belief in the national regeneration of the German people. For was not the destiny of the nation far more important than the fate of the individual? Hitler had been a disaster, but were the Russians and the Americans any better? Was it not their fault that Germany was now divided and that the Eastern territories had been lost? Was it not a fact that the country needed strong leadership and that the National Democrats were the most likely to provide it? A few days later a letter arrived, forty pages single-spaced, in which he developed this theme at greater length. The deputy leader of the NPD once said that his party had two Jewish members; he could not remember their names and addresses. For all I know, he may have been telling the truth—or, to be more precise, the half truth.

On Monday, November 21, 1966, the day after the Bavarian state elections, the London *Daily Express* carried the banner headline: NEW NAZIS WIN AGAIN. The *Sun* proclaimed: NAZIS MARCH TO VICTORY; the *Daily Mirror*, NEW NAZIS STORM TO TRIUMPH; and the *Daily Mail*, ANOTHER TRIUMPH FOR NEO-NAZIS. In the body of the reports it was stated that the National Democratic Party (NPD), a right-wing extremist group, had polled 7.4 per cent of the total vote in the Bavarian elections, having obtained 7.7 per cent in the state of Hesse a few weeks before. A poll of 7 per cent is not usually interpreted in London in terms of a "march to victory," let alone a "storm to triumph"; a candidate polling that much in Britain would, in fact, automatically lose his deposit. But this was clearly an extraordinary event. If the headlines of the British press were somewhat alarmist, most other European newspapers also took a serious view of the outcome of these elections. So did most responsible German observers, though only a few went as far as the advertiser in a Munich newspaper who announced that he had decided to emigrate when he heard of the results—would anyone be interested in a comfortable, spacious, three-room flat in a good residential area?

After the headlines came the editorials, resolutions by various organizations in New York and Milan, Tel Aviv and London, protest meetings, open letters, and a demand for action. Never mind the figures, said some of the experts in the Western capitals; Hitler's party had polled much less in 1928, a mere 2 per cent, and yet five years later it was in power.

How was it that a new party, modeling itself in some essential respects on the old Nazi party (the NSDAP without the SA, as the saying goes), had done so well in its first attempt? How explain its achievements in light of the fact that the party organization was relatively weak and amateurish, that its leaders were, as rabble rousers, not remotely in the class of Hitler and Goebbels, that the party had no major financial backers? How explain it against the background of an economic situation which, despite a slackening of the boom, could not possibly be compared with the crisis of 1929-33? Some of the election successes of the NPD had been won in areas which had been traditional Nazi strongholds but, inexplicably, there were breakthroughs in other areas as well. How to account for all this? Many Germans have in recent weeks tried to provide an answer to these questions. Their first reaction had been one of indignation at the sensationalist headlines in the foreign press. Was this not another instance of the double standard used by the West *vis-à-vis* Germany? Did not every country have its extreme right wing? Had not Poujade in France and the Italian neo-Fascists in their time polled even more votes than the NPD without causing a similar commotion? Had not some Western commentators been predicting an imminent return of the Nazis almost since the end of the war, and had not their prophecies, time and time again, been belied by the course of events? The more thoughtful German observers realized, of course, that, in the perspective of recent German history, even a comparatively small success by right-wing extremists was bound to have repercussions far beyond its intrinsic importance. They understood that what really bothered their neighbors was not the figure of 7 per cent, but the question: what next?

The basic reasons behind the advance of the NPD have been known for a long time, and they can be summarized in a few sentences. In every democratic country a certain section of the population gravitates toward the extreme Right. There has always been an extreme Right in Germany;

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during the first years after the defeat it was submerged; during the 50's and early 60's it was split into many little groups and therefore did not constitute an effective political force. This led some observers to believe that the extreme Right had all but ceased to exist. But all along, some ten to twenty per cent of the population has been firmly convinced that Hitler did more good than harm—apart from such excesses as killing the Jews rather than deporting them, and apart from such miscalculations as starting a war which he was bound to lose. In past elections, some of these men and women abstained from voting altogether; others voted for a variety of right-wing splinter groups; still others, for lack of a suitable alternative, supported the right wing of the Christian Democrats, or in some instances the Free Democrats. In 1966 there was, for the first time since the war, a movement of the extreme Right which had a real chance of gaining representation in parliament. Hence its startling successes. The extreme Right, hitherto submerged, has now surfaced. In the process it has gathered strength, rallying to its banner many who, while in sympathy with the aims of the NPD all along, had not in the past had an opportunity to express their feelings. One of the main election slogans of the NPD was *"Man kann wieder wählen"*—you can choose again,* there is a real alternative. But this explanation raises many new questions: why did it happen now? How explain the impact of the NPD on some sections of the youth? Who are its leaders and what do they really want? What, above all, are its chances of making further headway?

At this point, a brief historical detour is necessary. Most leaders of the NPD began their political careers in one of the right-wing splinter groups of which there were at least eighty in Germany in the postwar period. There was the German *Reichs* party, the Socialist *Reichs* party, the European Social Movement, the German *Rechts* party, and many more. Despite economic and social conditions that favored the growth of such groups (such as, for example, the presence of millions of refugees from the East), none of these groups attained much influence. The only exception was the Socialist *Reichspartei* which, before it was banned in 1952, polled ten per cent and more in parts of Lower Saxony and elsewhere in North Germany. But its influence, too, was regionally limited. The party was about to disintegrate anyway; its leaders—like those of other right-wing splinter groups—quarreled on both ideological and personal grounds; some were staunchly anti-Communist in inspiration, while others favored a neutralist line in the Cold War, and a few were even compromised by having accepted subsidies from East Germany.

Even so, some of them did not despair. They realized that although their organizations attracted only a few hundred members, or at best a few thousand, there was a considerably larger reservoir of good will around them. The sentiments expressed by the Bundestag and by the intelligentsia on such subjects as, for instance, recent German responsibility for the crimes committed by the Nazi regime, were not necessarily shared by the small-town *Stammtische*. There was a great deal of resentment about the lack of a "firm national policy," about the denigration of all national values by "left-wing intellectuals," about foreign workers, indulgence toward sex criminals and murderers of taxi drivers, about restitution to the Jews and aid to Africa, about German miniskirts and German *Gammler* (beatniks). Whichever resolution was passed by the Bundestag in Bonn, a majority of Germans had persuaded themselves by 1966 that the time had come to put an end to the war-crimes trials. Another hopeful indication was the success of right-wing extremist literature, above all the *Soldaten Zeitung*, which subsequently became the *Nationalzeitung*. Dr. G. Frey, its editor, is a man in his thirties and could not therefore be charged with support of Hitler. But the inspiration of both Hitler and Goebbels was unmistakable in every issue of what became within a few years one of the more influential as well as one of the more widely read of West German weeklies.

Among the groups that contended for the leadership of the extreme Right during the last decade, the *Deutsche Reichspartei* was the most prominent. But in the elections of 1957 it polled a mere one per cent of the total (about 300,000 votes); five years later, it did even worse. It was further weakened by a number of petty scandals; its Cologne branch had to be closed after it was discovered that several of its members had daubed swastikas on the local synagogue at Christmas 1959. There was a constant tug-of-war between a minority which favored a neutralist foreign policy and the majority, which was militantly anti-Communist. The party was too radical, and, above all, too sectarian to be a popular success. Adolf von Thadden, who had been its leading figure, realized that in this form the party had no political future. In order to gain real influence in German political life, a transformation was needed to establish a new movement that could both serve as a haven for all the shipwrecked right-wing splinter groups *and* attract the dissatisfied of all classes in West Germany to whom a strongly nationalist and authoritarian policy would appeal. Von Thadden persuaded most of his colleagues to dissolve the old party and, in November 1964, to establish a new movement, the NPD. At its first convention, von Thadden said that the party hoped to attract ten thousand members during its first year, and to double the membership during the following year. These goals were fulfilled earlier than had been assumed possible: the NPD

* *Wählen* having a double meaning in German—both to vote and to choose—Ed.

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now has twenty-five thousand members, perhaps a bit more. These are modest figures, but such statistics do not provide much guidance in Germany as to the real strength of a political party. Almost immediately after its establishment, the NPD began to contest local elections with greater enthusiasm than its predecessors. To be sure, it attracted only 644,000 voters (two per cent of the total) in the West German general elections of September 1965, not yet an impressive achievement. But subsequent regional elections have shown that there may be greater things to come. The party did well in Hesse, which is ruled by the Social Democrats, and generally considered to be an exemplary state (*Musterländle*); it scored above its own expectations in Bavaria, the traditional citadel of political Catholicism. If it could do that well under unfavorable conditions, there was every reason to assume that it would do even better in some of the Protestant areas of Northern Germany which have a strong nationalist tradition.

The leadership of the new party puts the accent on respectability; strong-arm methods are strictly discouraged. This is partly a device of self-preservation, because the party is still too small to engage in methods similar to those practiced by the Hitler movement between 1930 and 1933. But this is not the only consideration. Bonn—to quote the title of a famous book—is not Weimar; the general climate of the Federal Republic is not conducive to street battles. In the 20's and 30's, tens of thousands of toughs could be mobilized without much difficulty. It is much harder to find such people at a time of full employment. Moreover, large-scale rowdyism would antagonize more people than it is likely to attract. The present leaders of the NPD want to enter parliament, not to engage in direct action. The president of the new party, Fritz Thielen, is the very symbol of respectability, solidity, and similar bourgeois virtues. The owner of a Bremen cement factory, he has been successful in local politics, but until recently was hardly known outside his native city. An indifferent speaker, heavy and slow in manner, he is not exactly a charismatic political figure. Thielen never belonged to the Nazi party; his family tradition is *Deutsch-National,* the conservative, right-wing nationalism of Wilhelmine and Weimar Germany. His deputy, Adolf von Thadden, is far more in demand as a public speaker; he also has greater political flair and experience, being a former member of the Bundestag. Thadden (who is forty-five), comes from the East-German landed gentry; his grandfather was one of Bismarck's closest friends, his half-sister, Elizabeth, was executed as a traitor by the Nazi regime. An officer in the German army during the war, von Thadden, like Thielen, was not a member of the Nazi party. Not too much importance should, however, be attributed to this. When the war broke out von Thadden was barely eighteen—too young to qualify for party membership.

Among the eighteen members of the party executive, the ex-Nazi element is admittedly much more strongly represented; about two-thirds of this group belonged to the party or to one of its auxiliary organizations. None of them was very prominent at that time—they were the lieutenants, captains, or, at most, the majors of the party units. There are a few journalists of the Goebbels-Rosenberg school, and a national bard of Third-Reich vintage. The names of most of these men are known to the student of German postwar right-wing radicalism; they belonged successively to a series of parties, wrote for the party press, and spoke on behalf of the party at election meetings.

In conversation with the press and foreigners, some of the propagandists of the NPD sound eminently reasonable. Otto Hess, one of the deputy leaders, said a few weeks ago that his party did not want to gloss over anything that had happened, least of all the horrible treatment of the Jews. "But you cannot ask mere mortals for a permanent *'Mea culpa.'*" Thielen, the leader, made comments to the same effect; Von Thadden, when asked about anti-Semitism said: "Oh well, there are only twenty-five thousand Jews in Germany." As an afterthought he added: "Well, I think anti-Semitism is a bad thing *per se.*" And on another occasion: "The foreign workers are for us what the Jews were for the Nazis." Other NPD propagandists sound on occasion less statesmanlike, especially in their internal assemblies; speakers have strict orders not to be too extreme, but quite often their demagogy carries them away.

During the 1965 election campaign, the NPD held fifteen hundred meetings and distributed several million leaflets. Even so, the party apparatus is comparatively weak; there are few full-time organizers. During the recent Bavarian elections, a *Bundeswehr* captain supervised the preparations in the strategically important Nuremberg region. There are no paramilitary units like the storm troopers, no elite groups like the SS, no uniforms and no badges. According to the present constitution of the NPD, the party is divided into regional units (*Länder* and *Kreise*). Members meet about once a month in closed session, usually in a local public house belonging to a sympathizer, and pay their dues (about 75 cents per month). Some meetings are open to the public. In addition, there are special gatherings for younger members, Christmas parties, dances. Studying the party calendar for one specific month (December 1966), one finds a heavy concentration on small and medium-sized towns in Northwest Germany and also, incidentally, in the neighborhood of army camps. Among the speakers, apart from the members of the party executive (located in Hanover), one finds local dignitaries—lawyers, physicians, shopowners, a few clergymen and army officers. The party finances are obviously based on more than membership fees alone, but there is no reason to

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disbelieve the claim of the party leadership that it receives many small contributions rather than a few big subsidies.

The NPD has no program. Its leaders frequently say that a detailed program would only create confusion and unnecessary disputes; there is, however, a twelve-point manifesto, with Gaullist undertones, calling for a united independent Germany. This manifesto calls for a determined effort on the part of the Germans to take responsibility for their own destiny. Without a reunited Germany, there will be no united Europe. "Germany first, then Europe: Germany to the Germans, Europe to the Europeans. We proclaim a German policy independent of foreign interests." The first of the twelve general principles enumerated by the manifesto calls for the elimination of waste and corruption; the second, for a reasonable economic policy. Points three and four promise support to workers and peasants respectively. Point five advocates the limitation of foreign aid and restitution payments, if not their total cessation. Points six to eight concern health and education, and include a protest against the heavy emphasis on sex in literature, the arts, the press, television, and cinema. Nine calls for an end to the "one-sided trials" of Nazi criminals. Ten: "We reject the eulogies of high treason and the statement that Germany alone is to blame for all the unhappiness in the world. . . . We demand an end to the lie about the sole German responsibility whereby thousands of millions have been extorted from our nation." Eleven: "Germany claims the territories where Germans have lived for centuries. We contest with no nation the land where it has settled, but insist with equal determination on the right to our own land." The last point asks for an end to the "evil spirit of submission," and states that only those conscious of their own national dignity can hope to gain the respect of the world and the friendship of other nations.

Party programs are notoriously vague, but this manifesto is even more meaningless than most. Some of these demands are common to all right-wing parties, others are vague or contradictory. They express sentiments rather than a political platform. For an understanding of the character of the NPD, the data about the social composition of the party and its electors are more helpful.*

The typical NPD supporter is Protestant, in the forty-five to fifty-nine age group, lower middle class, and lives in a small town somewhere in Northwest Germany. The proportion of refugees and expellees is only slightly higher in the NPD than the West German average. The younger generation is underrepresented (23 per cent in comparison with 28 per cent of the total population), but the NPD has gained support among this group during the last year. Only 24 per cent of the party's supporters is Catholic (Catholics account for 43 per cent of the total population). In the recent Bavarian elections, the party polled between 11 and 16 per cent in predominantly Protestant towns like Ansbach, but only 3 to 6 per cent in Catholic areas.

Is the working-class immune to NPD propaganda? The sociologists do not think so. In their view, the NPD finds it more difficult to gain a foothold in working-class areas, but once the party takes root there, the pattern conforms with that of the country as a whole. These facts and figures shed some light on the social composition of the NPD, on the kind of people the party is likely to attract. They do not explain the reasons for its appeal. These can be understood only against the general background of current German politics.

DURING THE last year or so, the political climate in West Germany has changed palpably, and certainly not for the better. For the first time in their postwar history, the Germans have faced a number of emergencies and crises, and they have not exactly passed these tests with flying colors. Under the long paternal reign of Chancellor Adenauer, many Germans became accustomed to a degree of stability and security that is unusual in the modern world. Erhard, his successor, was a weaker man, an advocate of laissez-faire in both economics and politics. A creeping dissatisfaction began to be felt, which culminated in a real crisis when a deficit of $750 million was discovered in the national budget that had been prepared for 1967. This was due to an increase in public expenditure of about nine per cent over the previous year, whereas industrial production had increased by only 3.5 per cent. But underlying this was a general crisis of confidence; the conviction that "Erhard must go" became widespread in the ruling Christian Democratic party, and various heirs-apparent began to stake their claim to the succession. The subsequent acute parliamentary crisis lasted several weeks, because the search for a new government ran into difficulties. It was resolved only after protracted negotiations by the formation of a CDU-SPD coalition under Kiesinger and Brandt.

This kind of crisis is not unknown to other European democracies. While not exactly welcomed as an ideal state of affairs, it is accepted as part of the normal democratic process. Not so in Western Germany; the idea of being without a strong central government, even for a little while, seemed too great a psychological burden for many citizens. There was a great deal of criticism of the Bonn *Schwatzbude*†, of the good-for-nothing par-

*Sociologists, political scientists, the various German opinion polls, and sundry other institutions have tackled the NPD phenomenon with all the techniques of modern social investigation. Much factual information has already been amassed, above all by Professor Scheuch, a Cologne sociologist. Several books published within the last few months also deal with the NPD such as F. Richert's *Die nationale Welle,* and *National oder Radikal* by Bessel-Lorck.

† Literally, a place for mere idle chatter—ED.

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ties, of soft politicians without stature or backbone, interested mainly in feathering their own nests; the notion that these might be the normal growing-pains of a democratic regime seems not to have occurred to many people. It was not so much the German sense for order which rebelled (though this, too, may have played a certain part); what was revealed, above all, was the immaturity of the democratic tradition, the fear of standing on one's own two feet, the longing for the kind of security which only a strong leadership can provide.

The parliamentary emergency is now over, but the crises in economics and foreign policy persist. Although both these latter crises originated in some real difficulties now facing the country, they are nevertheless "normal," in the sense that neither of them constitutes a serious danger to the existence of the *Bundesrepublik*. But instead of facing them realistically, many Germans reacted by magnifying them out of all proportion, by persuading themselves that the situation was very grave, if not actually hopeless. By long tradition, Germans hold the manly virtues in high esteem, but there is perhaps no other nation which passes so quickly from exaggerated self-confidence to despondency.

The present German economic crisis is largely psychological in origin. No doubt, the rate of growth in productivity and production has slackened. But no one in the know really expected that it would continue to expand at the same startling rate as that of the 50's and early 60's. Western Europe in general enjoyed a great economic boom during this period (with Britain and Belgium lagging somewhat behind), and is now experiencing a similar process of slackening. The rate of industrial growth in Germany in 1964 and again in 1965 was among the highest in Western Europe (8.8 per cent and 5.5 per cent respectively), compared with 7.6 per cent and 2.5 per cent in Britain, 7 per cent and 2 per cent in France, 0 per cent and 4.4 per cent in Italy. At present it is running at approximately 2-3 per cent, about as high as in 1963. Admittedly, industrial development is not uniform; the chemical industry, for instance, has been advancing much more quickly, whereas there have been difficulties in building, steel, and coal-mining—the last mainly as the result of the transition to other sources of energy. By and large, however, the country continues to prosper; Christmas spending reached an all time high—seven per cent more than last year. (In a Düsseldorf jeweler's shop stood a Christmas tree made of solid silver and decorated with diamonds, sapphires, and pearls.) If unemployment has been rising a little, there are still more job openings than there are unemployed, and private incomes, too, are still going up. (The unemployment for November 1966 was a little over 200,000, or about 1 per cent; in December it rose to 1.5 per cent; some economists forecast 700,000 unemployed for the spring, a rate of 3.2 per cent. But during the 50's, the era of the "economic miracle," it never fell below 3.5 per cent.)

The economic barometer has been pointing to recession for quite a while, but there would be no cause for alarm even if the situation were to deteriorate further; such recessions occurred in 1950-51, and again in 1957-58, and Europe and Germany survived them. But such is the insecurity of many Germans that talk about a major economic crisis has spread like wildfire. According to a leading opinion poll, a crisis of 1929 dimensions was either definitely certain or rather probable in the eyes of not less than 62 per cent of the population! Such a reaction strikes the outside observer as more than somewhat fanciful. Unfortunately, hypochondria in economics is not a joke, and such dire prophecies could have a self-fulfilling effect. Psychological motives play a major, sometimes perhaps a decisive, part in triggering severe economic crises. Healthy as the German economy is, it may not be strong enough to weather, without grave consequences, such a serious and wholly unnecessary crisis of confidence. For despite the great strides of the postwar period, many German industrial concerns are still under-capitalized, and bank credit is relatively difficult to obtain. Public reluctance to invest and to buy could have a snowballing effect within a short time. And this is exactly what is happening now: even Volkswagen, that most flourishing of concerns, had to stop production for seventeen days in the first quarter of 1967. Professor Nordhoff, the chairman, said recently that the difficult business situation "was caused by the almost complete loss of confidence of the German population." There is a real crisis, then, but it is largely a self-inflicted one.

IN THE ATTITUDE of many Germans to world affairs, the symptoms are even worse—a touch of paranoia, a belief that Germany has no allies and is about to be sold down the river by the United States, a fear of complete isolation. All German politicians have for a long time tacitly accepted the Oder-Neisse line, and they know that there is no chance of German reunification in our time. But few have dared to say this in public; those who did have usually come to grief. In this respect there has been a perceptible change in mood during the past year, but for large sections of the public it has taken the form of a rude awakening. There has been a growing resentment of America and an increasing sympathy for Gaullism or, to be precise, for certain desirable aspects of Gaullism such as a greater degree of independence from the United States. (This stems mainly from the fear that America will have to neglect Europe, and perhaps, eventually, leave it altogether as the result of American involvement in Southeast Asia.) But one cannot merely accept one half of Gaullism, and ignore the fact that the policy also entails a rapprochement with Russia and Eastern

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Europe, the recognition of the Oder-Neisse line, and eventually, no doubt, the recognition of East Germany.

THE DEMAND FOR a more independent German policy has two major sources. Up to a few years ago there was great and genuine enthusiasm, especially among the younger generation, for a united Europe, and not merely as an economic convenience. This dream was killed by de Gaulle; in historical perspective, that act may outweigh all the good he has done. As a result there has been a considerable clamor for national *Selbstbesinnung* —one of those impossible German catchwords that cannot be translated adequately—meaning a return to oneself, a stronger emphasis on the national interest. The other reason was hinted at by Chancellor Erhard in a speech in November 1965, when he said that as far as Germany was concerned, the postwar era had ended (meaning the two decades that had been completely overshadowed by the consequences of World War II). The new period, however, had engendered new problems; a new generation had grown up which could not be made to feel responsible for Hitler and the Third Reich. Germany had been on probation for twenty years, but it could not remain so forever. It ought to be permitted to have its own policy, even if that implies, occasionally, making its own mistakes. These sentiments, stated vaguely at first, were shared by the majority of Germans. They represent in many ways a natural demand, and one that was certainly not unexpected. But this demand was accompanied by political manifestations that were far from reassuring. On the Left, a comparatively small but vocal group of intellectuals, entrenched in literature, the arts, and, more importantly, the mass media, withdrew into an almost entirely negative attitude, displaying the well-known Weimarian syndrome: wholesale semi-anarchist attacks on the state and on all political parties. Their critique of a philistine society, justified if occasionally overdone, led them to write off the state altogether. With a few laudable exceptions, such as Günter Grass, they have made no attempt to influence politics; it is as if Germany were not their state or their country. The frightening polarization of political forces, the legacy of the 20's, seemed to be starting all over again; Tucholsky and his friends were once again jeering at the Social Democrats.

Politically more significant has been the growth of a new nationalism during the last two years. The chief spokesmen of this trend are Franz Josef Strauss, the head of the Christian Democrats in Bavaria, and, to a certain extent, Eugen Gerstenmaier, the president of the Bundestag, as well as some of Strauss's advisers like Winfred Martini and Armin Mohler. Their argument, now taken up in many editorials and speeches, runs as follows: after two decades of hard work, sacrifices, and sincere attempts to face the past, Germans have earned the right to be recognized by others as equals. But there is still far too much ill will toward Germany in the world, despite the best efforts of the German people since the end of the war. While many countries have indirectly benefited from the German economic miracle, none has been willing to accord Germany a political status commensurate with its economic importance. But, the argument continues, in the long run, it is quite impossible to treat an economic giant like a political dwarf; Germany cannot become a normal nation unless it is treated like one. A return to the national traditions is part of this process of normalization. Germans, as Mohler wrote, should cease to be afraid of history, of politics and power. Not everything in Germany's past was criminal; the younger generation should again be educated in a spirit of healthy nationalism. A nation cannot survive if it has no faith in itself and its values. The excessive self-recrimination, "fouling one's own nest," the nihilistic attitude toward Germany's past and its national values, the denigration of faith and honor and patriotism—all this must cease. Germany must be a democratic country, but this does not give anyone license to attack its national values and traditions indiscriminately. Germans, to be sure, should not be arrogant, but they ought to be far more independent and self-confident. They should regain their self-esteem and the esteem of others. And all this can be achieved only through a national regeneration.

It would be unjust (except in regard to the NPD) to equate this new nationalism with the spirit of the pre-1933 right wing. And yet it is a dangerous trend, for moderation has never been a German virtue. Traditionally, the rarest thing in Germany has been a patriotism that was not self-consciously aggressive. Patriotism has never come naturally to this latecomer among Western nations; attitudes considered self-evident elsewhere had to be discussed at great length in Germany, often in metaphysical terms, and then pursued relentlessly to the excessive final consequence—nationalism above everything else, and German nationalism above all others. German nationalism has been more exclusive of other aspirations and values than other nationalisms, and for the most part it has been anti-democratic in character. In the German scale of values, the nation has been traditionally placed above freedom and justice.

After 1945, of course, there has been, not unnaturally, a revulsion, especially among the young generation, against the entire national phraseology. True enough, the fact that Hitler operated with notions such as *Vaterland*, faith, honor, devotion, and sacrifice, does not necessarily invalidate them. But it does make one suspicious of the present use of such slogans in a country in which they can so easily be perverted, and among a people which, broadly speaking, has in its recent history suffered precisely from a surfeit of nation-

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alism. Moreover, in present-day Europe these slogans are at least to some extent anachronistic—whatever de Gaulle may say. In the specific German context they are also dangerous, even when they happen to be voiced by idealistic and well-meaning persons.

THE NEW MOOD of nationalism is reflected in German public life in countless newspaper articles, speeches, and private conversations. It has come into being against a background of some genuine grievances. More than twenty years after the end of the war, Germany is still divided, and there is no hope for reunification in the foreseeable future. There have, of course, been a great many official expressions of moral support, but, to put it quite bluntly, most Americans, Englishmen, and Frenchmen (not to mention Russians or Poles) could not care less about the division of Germany. Many believe, in fact, that this division is the best safeguard against a resurgence of German aggression and militarism. The debate about German unification is to a large extent academic because it is not in the power of the West to bring unification about. But there is perhaps insufficient awareness in the West that the permanent division of a country is not a normal state of affairs, and that no people would easily put up with it. It is bound to breed irridentism, for it is unrealistic to expect a native of Frankfurt to regard his cousin in Leipzig as a stranger in a foreign country. Instead of reiterating time and again platonic support for reunification and thus nursing unfulfillable hopes, would it not be more honest and, in the long run, more helpful, to admit that nothing can be done about it at present? (And, indeed, some Germans may have to be reminded from time to time that the division of their country is the direct result of Nazi aggression.) No one, to be sure, can ask them to give up the hope of reunification altogether, but all they can do now is engage in a policy of "little steps," even though it is not clear whether these will have any long-range effect.

The NPD benefits from the general nationalist trend. By itself, right-wing extremism does not constitute a grave danger in Germany. But there is a great reserve army of the eternally dissatisfied, of the non-committed German believers in know-nothingism. The NPD is a movement of protest by the discontented of all classes, particularly in the more backward areas, and it expresses the mood of a sizable section of the population—frustrated village schoolmasters and impoverished vintners, ambitious lieutenants and small businessmen under pressure from the large concerns, victims of denazification, expellees from the East, and other stepchildren of the economic boom. The lower middle class, as usual most prone to be affected by its propaganda, now includes, thanks to the economic miracle, the upper reaches of the former working class which have been absorbed by it and have adopted all the lower-middle-class attitudes and most of its prejudices. Like Poujadism, however, this movement of protest lacks purpose and a clear policy. Although there are many Nazis among its leaders, by and large the party is probably nearer to the Nationalist party of the Weimar Republic. This is not to embellish its character or to play down the danger: the *Deutschnationale* were a pretty vicious lot, profoundly anti-democratic, and their responsibility for Hitlerism was grave.

The leaders of the NPD are aware that Germany is no longer a great power and that there is no hope of regaining great-power status. They are anti-American and anti-Russian and do not think much of NATO.* They have a weakness for France and, strangely enough, for China; some of the "beer-table politicians" in the little towns of Bavaria and Lower Saxony dream of an alliance with Mao's Cultural Revolutionaries against Russia, Poland, and the decadent West. They stress their attachment to the lost territories beyond the Elbe and the Oder (whether this also includes Austria and the Sudentenland is a question which they prefer to leave open). They have the haziest notions about foreign policy; if pressed for practical proposals to achieve their aims, they will grudgingly admit that Germany has very little freedom of maneuver. They want the British and the American forces out of Germany, but so far they have not pressed for a bigger German army (a demand, after all, which would be the logical outcome of their position). They protest against the influx of foreign capital and its takeover bids in various branches of industry—but they know that the German economy needs foreign money to assure continuing prosperity. They attack the presence of 1.3 million foreign workers in Germany—but they realize that many of them play a vital part in the economy; few Germans would be willing to accept the menial jobs done by Turks, Greeks, and Sicilians.

Their policy on the Jewish question is equally contradictory. Party speakers have strict orders not to make anti-Semitic attacks, not to be drawn into a discussion of the Jewish problem or of Nazism in general. Partly, again, this is an act of self-preservation, for according to the German Basic Law *(Grundgesetz)*, open anti-Semitic propaganda could lead to their suppression. Partly there is genuine confusion. Yes, they are willing to accept Jews as members, provided these Jews are as loyal to Germany as the Israelis are loyal to their country. At the same time there are vicious at-

*Their attitude to Russia and Communism is ambivalent. On the one hand there is the traditional anti-Communism of the German lower middle class. On the other hand, there is the powerful attraction of a regime such as the one in East Germany, which is so much more authoritarian and "orderly," which encourages family life and makes the beatniks work, which does not tolerate avant-garde culture—a country in which life is so much quieter than in West Germany, because it has not yet been Americanized. . . .

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tacks on the restitution of looted Jewish property. One leader quoted Martin Buber with approval; another said that he was willing to make a pilgrimage to Auschwitz if the allies would make a similar pilgrimage to the cemeteries of Dresden. So far, the NPD leaders have not been to Auschwitz; they did, however, go to the cemetery of Landsberg prison to lay wreaths on the graves of some of those sentenced to death in the postwar trials. Thielen, the leader of the party, has stated that he would lose no time in expelling from the party anyone trying to justify the murder of defenseless people. There is no longer a Jewish problem, von Thadden said in conversation with a British journalist. He stated that most of the thirty thousand Jews now living in Germany were old; the younger ones leave when they can. But instead of the Jewish problem, he added, there is now Israel, which engages in diplomatic blackmail: "They never stop moaning about the past and continually demand more. The Bonn government accedes each time—how long is this supposed to go on?" Speakers at NPD meetings have declared that no crimes were committed on the soil of the Reich, that the war broke out because international Jewry wanted to destroy Germany, and that the Germans killed by the Allies perished no less inhumanly than did the Jews in Poland. Anti-Semitism, open or implicit, is a plank in NPD propaganda, though the term "Jew" does not appear in the party manifesto. But anti-Semitism is not a decisive political issue, and it is most unlikely to become one.

WHAT ARE THE long-term prospects of the NPD? Later this year there will be further regional elections in West Germany—in April, in Schleswig-Holstein, Rheinland-Pfalz, and Lower Saxony; in June, in Berlin and Bremen. The party is likely to do well in Schleswig and Lower Saxony, where it may obtain up to ten or twelve per cent of the vote. The Catholic Rhineland will be difficult territory for it, though the extreme Right did have traditional strongholds in the Pfalz. The Berlin climate, on the other hand, does not suit it; the party may not even contest the elections in the former German capital. If there were elections tomorrow, the NPD would probably be represented by about fifty deputies in the federal parliament. But general elections are not due for several years, and the long-term chances of the party are less certain. Much depends on the performance of the new coalition in Bonn. The feeling that Germany at last has a government again will no doubt reassure many who began to panic in recent months.

The present recession will probably be overcome within a year even if a return to the impressive rates of growth of the 50's and early 60's seems unlikely. The coalition will no doubt try to be more assertive of German interests in foreign affairs, but it will have no more freedom of maneuver than its predecessors, and there is no hope for major achievements. Stagnation in these matters would be grist for the NPD propaganda mill. Under the reign of a big coalition, the party is likely to profit from all government failures, for the only opposition represented in parliament, the Free Democrats, is passing through a severe crisis, and its survival is not beyond question.

The big coalition could be a success if it uses the opportunity to adopt some vital and long overdue decisions—which can only be taken by a national government with broad popular support—in the constitutional field, in economics, and in foreign policy. These decisions will be painful, but in the long run they are indispensable. If this chance is missed, if Mr. Kiesinger proves to be another Erhard, if the Social Democrats are ineffectual and the Christian Democrats continue their infighting, the crisis will deepen. In that case both parties would be discredited, and the coalition would not help to refurbish the image of the Social Democrats, who, in the eyes of the German middle class, have never been *regierungsfähig*, fit to govern. This is the Social Democrats' largest handicap; unless they overcome the belief that they cannot be trusted, they will never win a general election. Finally, there is the danger that if the big coalition should prove a failure, not only the parties in it, but the parliamentary regime itself, would suffer.*

What, then, should be done about the NPD in coming months? The suggestion made by some Christian Democrats to "overtake them from the Right" is impractical. Such a course would be dangerous and it would fail to carry conviction, for a small opposition group can always afford to be more extreme and demagogical than a governing party. Some outside observers have suggested that more should be done to enlighten German youth on Nazi crimes. This sounds like a sensible suggestion but it is not at all certain whether it would have the desired effect. The German schools have, it is true, been somewhat deficient in this respect, but by and large the young generation has taken in massive doses of information about the Nazis via radio, television, books, and films. Beyond a certain limit, the showing of films about Auschwitz and Maidanek yields diminishing returns, and provokes psychological resistance. A spirit of tolerance cannot be inculcated by textbooks, however excellent, and an increase in the number of lessons devoted to political education in the democratic spirit will not necessarily strengthen their impact. Travel abroad is probably more important. The young generation of Germans, the majority of which abhors dictatorial rule, has learned, and will continue to learn, far

*This may sound unduly alarmist. The new government has shown much initiative in its first steps both in domestic and foreign policies. But it is far too early to attempt to pass judgment about the new Chancellor, the coalition, and its policies.

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more about the democratic way of life by living example—by studying it in action during visits to other countries, by private contacts, and by personal observation—than it will by officially sponsored lectures.*

Finally, there is the possibility of outlawing the NPD. Under article 21 of the German Basic Law any group can be declared unconstitutional if by its goals or behavior, it aims at impairing or abolishing the free democratic order. This ban has been used against the Communist party; but many people are uneasy about it, and it may be revoked in the future. The general feeling is that this paragraph should be applied only in an emergency, for it is in conflict with the freedom of association guaranteed in the constitution. Most German politicians believe that anti-democratic parties should be banned only if they actually constitute a danger to democracy, and they are willing to accept the risks involved. If the NPD should grow, if its anti-democratic character should become even more manifest in its propaganda and political action, the demand that paragraph 21 be applied will no doubt increase. But at present most Germans would regard such a ban as an unnecessary admission of weakness.

ALL THINGS considered, the appeal of the NPD is fairly narrow and its prospects are not brilliant.† The belief that history in Germany is always bound to repeat itself is a fallacy: nothing is easier than drawing parallels, and nothing is more misleading, for it blinds one to the changing historical context. 1967 is not 1930, and Bonn with all its weaknesses (let it be said once again) is not Weimar. While democracy is not yet firmly rooted in Germany, some of the traditional bases of authoritarianism have been uprooted. To justify this cautiously optimistic assessment would require a long excursus into such topics as school and family life, the general postwar mood, the trade unions, the character of the young generation, and the acceptance of a democratic order by a majority of the German people.

The victory of the Nazi party was possible only in the context of specific historical factors. These included the anti-democratic opposition of the big landowners, the army, and quite a few of the industrialists, who did so much to weaken the Weimar Republic. The church, the family, and the schools were to a considerable extent authoritarian in character; the judiciary and the civil service were, as far as the majority of the population was concerned, above criticism. The democratic character of the republic of 1919 was simply not accepted by a large part of the population. The West Germany of today has many defects and will, no doubt, have to face various crises in the future, but its weaknesses are not those of the Weimar Republic. The *Junkers* have gone, the army officers—whatever their views—do not meddle in politics, and the industrialists identify themselves with the present state; they have done very well in it. The patriarchal character of the family and the authoritarian style in public life in general has lessened, and is no more pronounced in Germany today than in most European countries. The people, by and large, are reconciled to a democratic order, preferably one with a trusted father-figure at the head. The experience of Nazism and of World War II, when all is said and done, have had a deep impact on the German national consciousness.

These observations are unlikely to convince those who know instinctively that Germans will be Germans, that national character is unchangeable; they are presented here as the assessment of one who has had the opportunity to watch the German political scene from a fairly close angle. To summarize: it is unlikely that the NPD will become a decisive factor in German politics. The prediction, however, that the new ("respectable") nationalism will become the prevailing mood in West Germany cannot, unfortunately, be dismissed with equal certainty. But whatever happens, we should never forget that the dimensions of the German scene have changed. As the result of the war, the political and military importance of the country has been greatly reduced. A further growth of right-wing extremist influence could cause serious harm to Germany's prestige; it is difficult to imagine how it could adversely affect anyone else. Everyone now knows that the Nazi movement in the early 30's was underrated by many observers inside Germany and abroad; consequently, there is now a tendency to sound the tocsin too early, and perhaps too often. There are lessons to be learned from past history, but they are not as obvious and straightforward as some of us believe.

*German student politics has changed radically. In the Weimar period, the Nazis were the leading party in the university, long before the party scored its successes in national elections. Of those politically active in the universities today, the majority is oriented toward the Left, and some of the most vociferous belong to the extreme Left. They read Mao and the late Paul Baran; they discuss Merleau Ponty (*Humanism and Terror*); the *Critique of Pure Tolerance* by Wolff, Barrington Moore, and Herbert Marcuse has recently been published in a first edition of 10,000 copies.

† I would qualify this statement in one respect only: the influence of the NPD in some circles of the *Bundeswehr*, the new German army, is a matter of concern and may make action necessary. Contrary to belief outside Germany, NPD sympathizers are more often found among sergeants and lieutenants than among colonels, many of whom support the Social Democrats.

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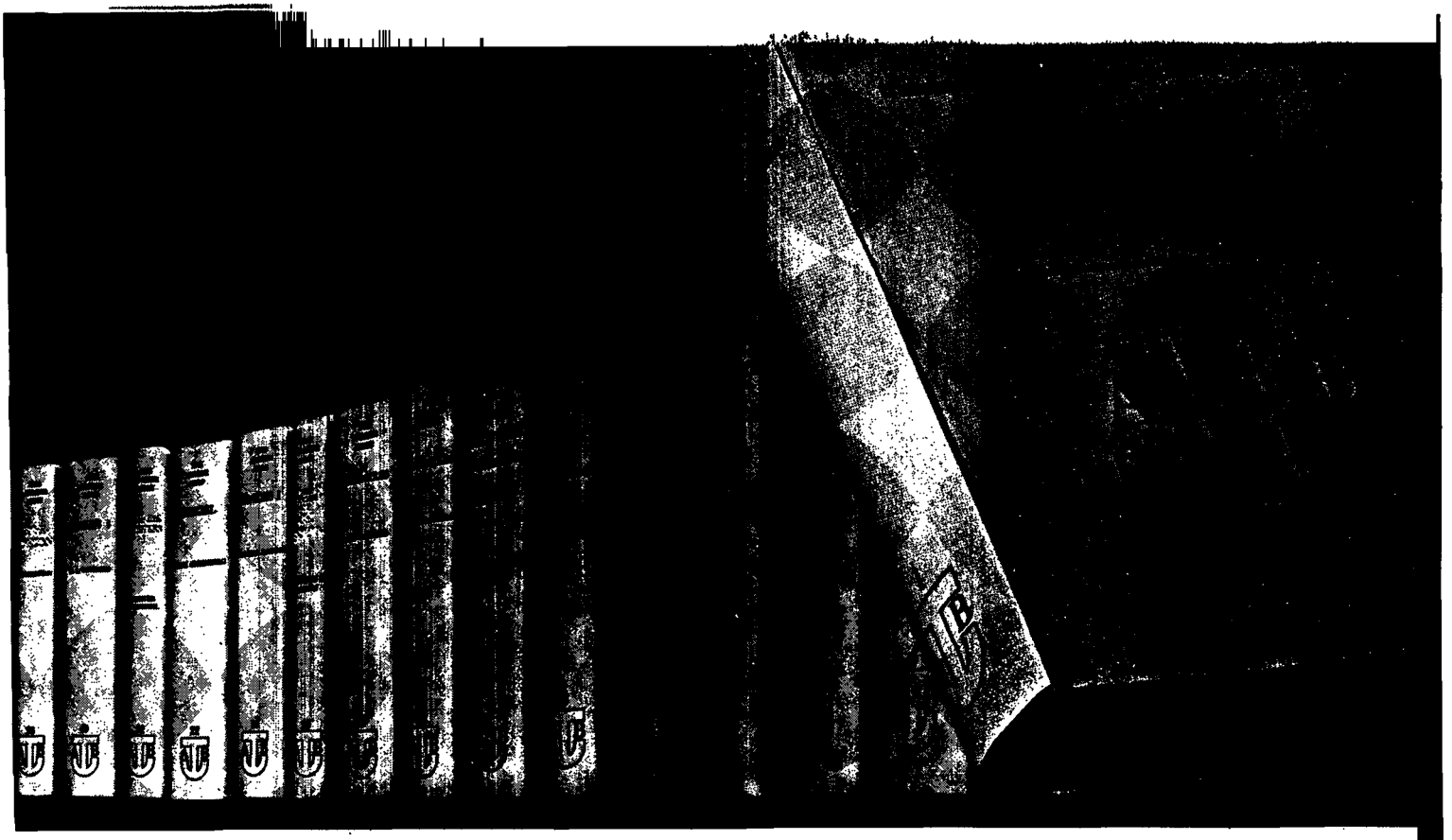

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*David Daiches, COMMENTARY, September 1965

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C. P. SNOW

ON ALBERT EINSTEIN*

ONE DAY AT Fenner's (the university cricket ground at Cambridge), just before the last war, G. H. Hardy and I were talking about Einstein. Hardy was a pure mathematician of world class, thirty years older than I was, but a close friend. Hardy had met Einstein several times, and I had recently returned from visiting him. Hardy was saying that in his lifetime there had only been two men in the world, in all the fields of human achievement, science, literature, politics, anything you like, who qualified for the Bradman class. For those not familiar with cricket or with Hardy's personal idiom, I ought to mention that "the Bradman class" denoted the highest kind of excellence: it would include Shakespeare, Tolstoy, Newton, Archimedes, and maybe a dozen others. Well, said Hardy, there had only been two additions in his lifetime. One was Lenin and the other was Einstein.

I wasn't quarreling with that. It was clear, all the theoretical physicists told us so, that if Einstein had not existed, 20th-century physics would itself have been different: this one could say of no one else, not even Rutherford or Bohr: to make that kind of difference was, incidentally, a necessary condition for entry into the Bradman class. Further, his character was inextricably mixed up with his achievement. Neither Hardy nor I were given to exaggerated estimates of human virtue: but again we took it for granted that if the word "noble" had any meaning, this was the noblest man we had met.

Good, gentle, and wise. Hardy recalled that some bright journalist had thrown off that description of Einstein: could I think of any three adjectives more exact? Here, for the first time, I began to hedge. Yes, they were true; but they didn't tell the whole truth, or anything like it. If one was talking in that kind of shorthand, one ought to add another adjective. But what should it be, without disturbing the impression? "Obstinate" was too weak and too carping, "counter-suggestible" was faintly grotesque, "independent" or "non-conformist" did not say anything like enough, "deliberately impersonal" was a half-truth. There was something in him that I couldn't describe but was stuttering toward. That conversation took place nearly thirty years ago, and whenever I have thought about Einstein since, I have still found myself stuttering.

To begin with, he was much more unlike other men and women than other eminent persons whom I knew as a young man. In psychological structure, though not of course in gifts, one can find plenty of parallels to Lloyd George, Rutherford, Wells, Hardy: most of us have met people bearing them a family resemblance in the course of our workaday lives. Churchill was much stranger. In some ways, I have come to think, there were faint likenesses between Churchill and Einstein. I don't mean that they were alike in terms of spirit or intellect: in those respects no one could bear comparison with Einstein. But in some aspects of their psychological nature, in the ways in which their characters formed themselves, I believe one can find some links. If I had thought of this while Hardy was alive (he had all the Bloomsbury contempt for Churchill), he would have repudiated me for good.

As with Churchill, there were some bizarre paradoxes in Einstein's career. I suspect that in natures like theirs, where the ego starts abnormally strong —though Einstein, unlike Churchill, learned to subjugate his personal self or forget it—these paradoxes are more likely to occur than with less inflexible men. Anyway, Einstein was universally recognized at thirty-seven as the greatest theoretical physicist of his age, the equal of Newton. That is still his ranking: the work he did between the ages of twenty-two and thirty-seven stands there forever. But—it isn't that, like Newton, he gave up physics. It remained the prime internal devotion of his life, he worked at it with the ultimate concentration which was one of his supreme qualities until he died at seventy-six: and almost all his colleagues thought, and still think, that he wasted the second half of his life.

There were other paradoxes. He was the voice of liberal science, the prophet of reason and peace, for a generation. At the end, he believed, without

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bitterness, in the depth of his gentle and tranquil spirit, that it had all been in vain. He was the most complete of internationalists: he broke away from the Jewish community, he hated all separatisms and nationalisms: yet he was compelled to take his place as the most eminent Jew alive, the committed Zionist. He wanted to lose his personality in the world of nature; but that personality became one of the most publicized of the century, and his face—at first glance the face of an inspired and saintly golliwog—as well known as a film star's.

Just to add to the list, he was credited, or blamed, with a paradox that did not exist. It has become a legend that he was responsible for the atomic bomb—that he, the prophet of human brotherhood, had to take on his conscience the slaughter of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, and the possibility of genocides to come. It would have been an irony, but it was not true. In practice, the discovery of nuclear fission owed nothing to his work: and his part in sending the famous letter to Roosevelt in 1939 was not significant. I will try to depersonalize this story a little later.

It was, of course, his moral character which demonstrated itself in those paradoxes of his life. That character was already formed before he was sixteen. Here we have to rely on the facts (his career is unusually well documented, especially through Swiss sources) and to take his own comments, written when he was an old man, as rationalizations after the event:

> I have never belonged wholeheartedly to a country, a state, nor to a circle of friends, nor even to my own family.
>
> My personal external circumstances played only a minor role in my thoughts and my emotions.
>
> Perception of this world by thought, leaving out everything subjective, became, partly consciously, partly unconsciously, my supreme aim. [Of himself, in early adolescence.]
>
> When I was still a rather precocious young man, I already realized most vividly the futility of the hopes and aspirations that most men pursue throughout their lives.
>
> Well-being and happiness never appeared to me as an absolute aim. I am even inclined to compare such moral aims to the ambitions of a pig.

These statements (which came from the bone of his character, and altogether omit the jolly, laughing flesh) were written in old age. They couldn't have been made by many men—perhaps by Spinoza, whom Einstein so much admired and in spirit resembled. But, even from Spinoza or Einstein, they need a bit of understanding. After all, these men did live on this earth like the rest of us.

Einstein's family were easygoing, freethinking petit-bourgeois, whose ancestors had lived in Swabia for generations. They were Jewish by origin, but agnostic and indifferent to religion. It was a tolerant and casual home: uncomfortably casual inasmuch as his father, who started a small electrical factory in Munich when Einstein was one year old (in 1880), did not have the drive to make a go of it. But they were never really poor.

The young Einstein was not a brilliant child. Intellectually, he seemed backward (this was also true of Churchill). He was late in learning to talk. All this is singular, particularly so for a future mathematician. As a rule, mathematical talent shows itself at a very early age. A high proportion of eminent mathematicians have asked questions about large or infinite numbers before they were three: the stories about Hardy and Dirac, for example, are well authenticated. The only really good juvenile mathematician I have personally watched was in good form at the age of four. Now that we are beginning to learn more about this sharp and specific talent, I believe that we shall normally know whether children do or do not possess it before they have learned to read.

Well, Einstein was not a mathematician in the sense Hardy was, but no one would suggest that he was devoid of mathematical ability. Little or none of this was detected in his early childhood. He did begin, at the age of ten, to show precocity: but it was a precocity, not of intellect, but of character.

His parents, who might have been Catholic converts if they had had any religion at all, sent him first to a Catholic primary school. That he didn't mind. At ten he went on to one of the Munich *Gymnasia*. That he hated: and he hated it for just the same reasons as would have made him hate it at seventy. It was militaristic: at once, and forever, he detested German militarism. Children marched and drilled, teachers barked, it was a barracks. In later life he became as unqualified a nonconformist as a man can be. He often rationalized his actions, but they deserve some inspection. At ten he was already certain that this disciplined machine was not for him. He had a horror of constraint, in any shape or form, physical, emotional, intellectual. *Zwang*. Did I know the German word, he asked me, as we talked about English manners. In the Munich high school he made his first strike against *Zwang*.

He did, in fact, both a brave and an odd thing. He became, for a short period, about a year, a religious Jew. It was an attempt, as he saw it later, to "liberate himself from purely personal links." It was also an attempt to mark himself out from the conformity which surrounded him. As we shall see, he repeated this pattern at the height of his fame when, without belief, he once more stamped himself as a Jew, an active Zionist. If he was going to be identified with any group—and that was difficult, so unyielding was his ego—then it must be with the poor and persecuted of the world.

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THIS DECISION, like each single decision that he took in his life, came from within himself. At ten he seems to have rested as much certainty in his own thought as he did at seventy: his own thought, and that of no one else alive. The religious phase did not last long. Once more he applied his own thought to it, and at twelve he emerged into the kind of cosmic religious nonbelief which lasted him a lifetime. He used the word God so often that people were often deceived. From his boyhood he possessed deep religious *feeling*: but when he spoke of God, he did not mean what a religious believer means (although he might perhaps have accepted Bonhoeffer's God). As he said himself in middle-age: "I believe in Spinoza's God who reveals himself in the harmony of all being, not in a God who concerns himself with the fate and actions of men."

That conclusion he reached in early adolescence, brooding by himself as a pupil—not at all a distinguished one—at the Munich high school. With the same total independence, he decided what to work at. He was quite good, no more, at physics and mathematics. Most of the academic drill struck him as intolerable, and he would not play. In this he was quite unlike most clever boys and nearly all future academics. People like Rutherford (who was as original in creative power, though not in temperament) took what they were given and made the best of it. Hardy disliked Winchester, his English private school, but was a born competitor who wanted the prizes and the top Cambridge scholarships. To Einstein, competition meant nothing: he had no temptation to compromise or please. Here again one can see a ghostly resemblance to the young Churchill, unable or unwilling to make any serious effort at school, except at writing English essays, which he happened to enjoy.

Einstein's father was a peculiarly unsuccessful businessman. The Munich business was a flop, and so, more or less absentmindedly, he moved on to Milan, where he did slightly worse. That move happened when Einstein was fifteen; he was left behind in Munich to complete his schooling. Since his mind had been totally independent before, it could not become more so: but he had six months alone and reached three more solitary decisions.

He arrived in Milan and announced them to a family which seems to have been as cheerful about them as he was himself. The first was to leave the Munich school, which he hated, and to abandon the final examination, which he despised. The second was to leave the Jewish community, to which he still formally belonged. The third, and the most dramatic, was to give up his German citizenship. He decided to have no obligations which he did not make himself. His moral confidence was absolute. He was enough, just on his own.

As an anticlimax, he promptly failed his entrance examination to the Zurich Polytechnic. He wanted to study there, in order to become an electrical engineer—which sounds quaint, because of the legend of Einstein's unpracticality; in fact he was no more unpractical than Hardy was absentminded: these cheap stereotypes are hard to destroy. Although Einstein's father could not find a franc, better-off members of the Einstein family—scattered all over Europe in the Jewish wanderings—thought a Zurich education might not be a bad idea, and were prepared to scrape together an allowance for him until he graduated. Not entirely surprisingly, he passed the entrance examination in the subjects he had studied, and failed in those he had not.

So he, already mature to an extent most men never achieve, had to put in a year in a Swiss cantonal school, and, with a trace of cussedness, enjoyed it. From there he duly passed into Zurich, now intending to train as a physics teacher. As usual, he immediately came into opposition with *Zwang*. Not that he didn't like the Swiss, who, in his view, were civilized and democratic. This time *Zwang* cropped up in the shape of examinations. The curriculum could have been better devised, thought Einstein. The examinations so constrained his mind that when he had graduated, he did not want to think about scientific problems for a year.

Actually, he was quite lucky. He was taught by one man of genius, Minkowski, who later recognized, after Einstein's early publications, that his pupil was a much greater genius (but as a student "a lazy dog"). The general standard of the Zurich Polytechnic was high. He made friends who thought that he was a superior being. He was probably as well off at Zurich as he would have been at Hardy's Cambridge.

The truth was, no university in the 90's could have contained or satisfied him—and it is doubtful whether any university could satisfy a young Einstein today. He was beyond the normal limits of independence. He passed his final examination all right, though not spectacularly. But Zurich did not keep him on as an assistant (i.e., the lowest grade of postgraduate job). That was a gross error in talent-spotting: it was almost the only misadventure which rankled with him. And yet, at almost exactly the same time, Cambridge failed to keep the much more accommodating Rutherford, who, instead of being given a fellowship, was encouraged to remove himself to Montreal.

So Einstein was a graduate, but unemployed. For a while it looked as though he was unemployable. He took one or two temporary teaching posts. He had no money at all. The Einstein clan had financed his education, but now they expected him to earn a living. He had one old suit, which didn't matter, and little food, which did. He was rescued by a generous and admiring friend, Marcel Grossman, who became himself a good scientist. Grossman persuaded his father, a well-to-do Swiss industrialist, to recommend Einstein for a position.

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The position was, of all extraordinary things, that of patent examiner in the Swiss federal patent office. As an even more extraordinary thing, Einstein was appointed. The job was not especially arduous, and Einstein turned out to be good at it. One of his greatest intellectual gifts, in small matters as well as great, was to strip off the irrelevant frills from a problem: that happens to be the prime gift of a good patent examiner. He was also, as I have said, not at all devoid of practical sense. He liked gadgets, understood them, and even tried to invent them himself. Thus he did his patent work at great speed, efficiently, soon got extra pay, and was left, at twenty-three, with time to meditate, day after day, night after night, week after week, with the kind of concentration which was like a man grasping an object in his fist, on the nature of the physical universe.

He needed only one resource, which was his own insight. His thinking, of course, carried abstraction very far, but it is important to realize that his insight was first and foremost a *physical* one. At Zurich he had spent most of his time in the physics laboratory. When he did much of his major work his knowledge of mathematics was, by the standard of the top theoretical physicists, thin and patchy: he was much less well equipped than Clerk Maxwell, Born, Heisenberg, Pauli: to an extent, he had to pick up his mathematics as he went along, for the rest of his career. He said himself: ". . . my intuition in the mathematical field was not strong enough to be able to distinguish with basic conviction the fundamentally important from the rest of the more or less dispensable erudition. Moreover, my interest in acquiring a knowledge of Nature was infinitely stronger, and as a student it was not clear to me that the approach to a deeper knowledge of the principles of physics was bound up with the most intricate mathematical methods. This only dawned on me after years of independent scientific work."

It only dawned on him, in fact, when his physical insight had already led him to solve some of the great problems: when the special theory of relativity was behind him, and he was brooding on the general one; it was then he saw that the physical insight had to be interwoven with the heavy machinery of the tensor calculus.

It was like him to begin his work—and to achieve more than most mathematical physicists in a lifetime—with the aid of nothing but his own pure, unaided thought. No one else would have started with that suspicion of mathematical techniques. At twenty-three, he was already the man whom the world later wished, and failed, to understand. He had absolute confidence. He had absolute faith in his own insight. He was set on submerging his personality, for good and all, in the marvels of the natural world.

No one has stripped away the claims of self more ruthlessly, not even Niels Bohr, another of the saints of science. But it is wrong to romanticize anyone, even Einstein. It seems to me that a man has to possess a pretty hefty ego to need to subdue it so totally. A more naturally self-forgetful man wouldn't have required such a moral effort to forget himself. He did it: perhaps that was why, when I met him, I felt that he had been shaped by moral experience. It is here that one can pick out the black-and-white difference from Churchill, a similarly structured personality. Churchill, too, had a pretty hefty ego: but he didn't submerge it or even try to, he simply let it rip. It was probably only in action that he felt the same impersonality into which, by a moral imperative, Einstein serenely made himself.

But the old Adam-ego was not quite drowned. I think one ought to be a little wary of his attitude to the conventions. Yes, no one has been less conventional: but his rationalizations were somewhat too masterly. Somehow a man isn't so totally unconventional as that if he is absolutely free. It's easier sometimes to wear socks, than to explain that socks get holes in them. It takes too much effort to question each social action. Free-and-easy people take the conventions more lightly, sometimes dropping them, sometimes drifting along. It's more convenient, I should have thought, to get into a dinner jacket than to hack away at shirtsleeves with a razor in order to make a kind of under-vest: but Einstein would firmly have thought the opposite. About him, even in Jehovianic old age, there was still a residue—no, not really a residue but a vestigial air—of a nonconformist from a Central European café, the sort of character one used to meet between the wars, who made an impact by wearing odd shoes and his coat on backward.

As a very young man, when he was producing great discoveries, Einstein's only society was in just those cafés. He was the least gregarious of humankind—he spoke of his own "unconcealed lack of the need to frequent my fellow human beings and human communities." Yet he enjoyed the desultory easygoing European nights, the cigars, the coffee, the talk; he was both witty and merry, he had a reverberating laugh, he didn't give a damn. When life had sobered him, when he felt responsibility for so much, he missed those nights. He never got used to American parties, where people drank hard and didn't want to argue about ultimates. So far as he was ever at home, at any time in his life, it was in Bern and Zurich before World War I.

He got married in Bern, as soon as he took on his job at the patent office there. About this marriage, and his first wife, there is a conflict of evidence: much of the biographical material is good (there is an especially attractive book by Antonia Vallentin), but here there is some factual mystery. This first wife was a fellow-student at Zurich, four years older than he was: she was a Serbian called Mileva Maric. Here the certainty

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stops. She seems to have had a limp. Most of Einstein's Swiss contemporaries thought she was gloomy and incompetent; she may have been a genuine depressive. None of this sounds alluring, but other reports give her a Slav nakedness to life, a defenseless charm.

Was the marriage unhappy from the beginning? This will presumably never be known, though I picked up what may have been a clue. Einstein was utterly reticent about his personal life: a "puritanical reserve" was necessary, he said, to a scientist seeking truth. Antonia Vallentin, who knew his second wife well, suggests that he was a man of powerful sensuality. When I met him, that was certainly one of the impressions that he gave: but it is entirely possible, and perhaps more probable than possible, that he, like Tolstoy and Gandhi, both of whom he revered, felt that his sensuality was one of the chains of personality that ought to be slipped off. Anyway, in his first marriage he soon had two sons—those two he certainly loved. The elder gave him no trouble, and in due course became an excellent engineering professor in California. The younger one seems to have inherited, in an acute form, his mother's melancholia, and brought Einstein in middle-age what was perhaps his deepest private grief.

MEANWHILE, his first child born, Einstein, twenty-six years old, only three years away from crude privation, still a patent examiner, published in the *Annalen der Physik* in 1905 five papers on entirely different subjects. Three of them were among the greatest in the history of physics. One, very simple, gave the quantum explanation of the photoelectric effect—it was this work for which, sixteen years later, he was awarded the Nobel Prize. Another dealt with the phenomenon of Brownian motion, the apparently erratic movement of tiny particles suspended in a liquid: Einstein showed that these movements satisfied a clear statistical law. This was like a conjuring trick, easy when explained: before it, decent scientists could still doubt the concrete existence of atoms and molecules: this paper was as near to a direct proof of their concreteness as a theoretician could give. The third paper was the special theory of relativity, which quietly amalgamated space, time, and matter into one fundamental unity.

This last paper contains no references and quotes no authority. All of them are written in a style unlike any other theoretical physicist's. They contain very little mathematics. There is a good deal of verbal commentary. The conclusions, the bizarre conclusions, emerge as though with the greatest of ease: the reasoning is unbreakable. It looks as though he had reached the conclusions by pure thought unaided, without listening to the opinions of others. To a surprisingly large extent, that is precisely what he had done.

It is pretty safe to say that, so long as physics lasts, no one will again hack out three major breakthroughs in one year. People have complained that Einstein was not immediately recognized. That seems mildly unrealistic. Within a few months, physicists at Cracow were saying that a new Copernicus had been born. It took about four years for the top German physicists, such as Planck, Nernst, and von Laue, to begin proclaiming that he was a genius. In 1909, before he had any academic job at all, he was given an honorary degree at Geneva. Just afterward, Zurich University (not the Polytechnic) offered him a professorship. In 1911, he went to a full chair at the German University in Prague. In 1912, he was recalled to the Zurich Polytechnic, which had had, only a dozen years before, no use for him. In 1913, he was elected to the Prussian Academy of Science, at a high salary for those days, to be left free in Berlin for no duties except his research. He was by then thirty-four. He was being treated as handsomely as any scientist alive. I don't think the academic community, in particular the German-speaking academic community, comes out of that story badly.

There was, however, trouble in his home. No one knows how deeply it affected him. By the time he had moved to Prague, his marriage was going wrong. Altogether, the stay in Prague was an unhappy one. Einstein had to become a state official of the Hapsburg Empire, and as such was obliged to declare his religion. He had lost all connections with Judaism: but anti-Semitism was strong in Austria, and that was enough reason for Einstein to insist on registering himself—Israelite. His wife, Mileva, was sunk in melancholia: it didn't help that she was a Slav, in the midst of racial unrest.

Yet Einstein's laugh was still ringing out, his spirits were not yet damped. He was showing a new ability as an actor—with a touch of ham—on the lecture platform. There are pleasant stories of his playing the violin to a cultivated salon which discussed Kant, Hegel, and Fichte and enjoyed chamber music. The party often included Franz Kafka, not yet known to fame. One wonders if they ever talked to each other. They would not have had much in common.

When he went to Berlin in 1914, he left his wife and sons in Zurich. The marriage was over: he must have known it, though it seems that he did not say it. He was overcome by sadness, of a kind rare in him, when he left his children.

He arrived in Berlin some months before war broke out. He was already famous in the scientific world. He was going to attract fame in the world outside such as no scientist has known before or since. He was a pacifist soon forced to watch what he regarded as German madness among, not only the crowd, but his fellow-members of the Academy. He had preserved his Swiss nationality, which was some sort of protection,

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when, with his habitual courage, he became an ally of Romain Rolland. But he soon came to experience the blackest unpopularity. He could shrug it off: "Even the scientists of various countries behave as though eight months ago" (he was writing to Rolland in May 1915) "they had had their brains amputated."

NEVERTHELESS, in the middle of militaristic tumult, he found both personal and creative peace. Perhaps, or probably, the two were connected. Anyway, he went to live in Berlin with one of his uncles: and with this uncle's daughter, who had been unsatisfactorily married, divorced, and had two small daughters, he was happy. Maybe he fell in love: but, once again, this is unknown. Certainly he wanted no one else. When he was himself divorced, some years later, he married her. She protected him from nuisances until she died. She was unexacting, she was highspirited, she was fun, she was shrewd about people. Unlike his first wife, who was trained as a mathematician, she knew nothing whatever about his work. It was the kind of marriage that some of the greatest scientists have made. It set him free, and left him free. Before he met her, he had been going through a fallow period scientifically. Almost immediately after, he was thinking with a concentration, and reaching a creative ecstasy more intense, than he had known.

In November 1915, he wrote to Arnold Sommerfeld, himself a fine physicist, one of the classical scientific letters:

> This last month I have lived through the most exciting and the most exacting period of my life: and it would be true to say that it has also been the most fruitful. Writing letters has been out of the question. I realize that up till now my field equations of gravitation have been entirely devoid of foundation. When all my confidence in the old theory vanished, I saw clearly that a satisfactory solution could only be reached by linking it with the Riemann variations. The wonderful thing that happened then was that not only did Newton's theory result from it, *as a first approximation,* but also the perihelion motion of Mercury, *as a second approximation.** For the deviation of light by the sun I obtain twice the former amount.

Sommerfeld wrote a cautious and skeptical reply. Einstein sent him a postcard: "You will become convinced of the general theory of relativity as soon as you have studied it. Therefore I shall not utter a word in its defense."

It did not need defense. It was published in 1916. As soon as it reached England—across the increasing harshness of the war—scientists thought that it was almost certainly right. The greatest revolution in thought since Newton, they were saying. As a consequence of his theory (see footnote), Einstein had made a prediction. It was the prediction of an experimental effect which astronomers could test. In his paper, he asked them to do so. The English astronomers decided that this should be done. In March 1917—again across the war—they announced that on March 29, 1919 a total eclipse of the sun would take place. The critical experiment would be set up and Einstein's theory tested.

That is an old story. The test, of course, came out as predicted, and Einstein's theory stood.

It is a strange theory. As with Rutherford, as with most scientists, if Einstein had never lived most of his work would soon have been done by someone else, and in much the same form. He said himself that that was true of the special theory of relativity. But, when he generalized the special theory so as to include the gravitational field, he did something that might not have been done for a generation: and, above all, might not have been done in that way. It might, some good theoreticians have suggested, have ultimately been done in a way easier for others to handle. It remains an extraordinary monolith, like a Henry Moore sculpture, which he alone could have constructed—and at which he himself hacked away, hoping to make something grander, for the rest of his scientific life.

I will return in a moment to the second half of his scientific life, which was at the same time extraordinary, unsuccessful, and profoundly characteristic. In the meantime his public life, as soon as the general theory was published (his fame had already mounted *before* the confirmation), was unlike that which any other scientist is likely to experience again. No one knows quite why, but he sprang into the public consciousness, all over the world, as the symbol of science, the master of the 20th-century intellect, to a large extent the spokesman for human hope. It seemed that, perhaps as a release from the war, people wanted a human being to revere. It is true that they did not understand what they were revering. Never mind, they believed that here was someone of supreme, if mysterious, excellence.

As a symbol of science, either Rutherford or Niels Bohr might have been chosen. Rutherford left a more direct mark on 20th-century science (Einstein said: "I consider Rutherford to be one of the greatest experimental scientists of all time, and in the same class as Faraday. The reason I had no opportunity of mentioning him in my writings is because I concentrated on speculative theories, whereas Rutherford managed to reach profound conclusions on the basis of almost primitive reflection combined with relatively simple experimental methods"). Bohr founded a great Socratic school of theoretical physicists, and influenced others as Einstein never did. Both

* The perihelion motion of Mercury had already been measured, but not explained. The measurement agreed exactly with that which was required by Einstein's theory. Einstein was also predicting another very small optical effect which in 1916 had not yet been measured.

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Rutherford and Bohr were good men, but Rutherford hadn't Einstein's moral independence or resource; Bohr may have had, but could not project it. No, the public instinct was correct. As Hardy used to quote—it's only the highbrows (in the unpleasant sense) who do not admire the real swells.

Throughout the 20's he made himself the champion of good causes. He became a Zionist, though his religious thinking was quite un-Judaic:* he was on the side of Zion, out of an ultimate loyalty and also, as I have said before, because the Jews were the insulted and injured of this world. He spent a lot of time trying to promote international pacifism. This sounds strange to us now, but the 20's was a period of ideals, and even Einstein, the least suggestible of men, shared them. At a later period of his life, some Americans used to call him naive. That irritated me: he was not in the slightest naive: what they meant was that he didn't think that the United States was always 100 per cent right, and the Soviet Union 100 per cent wrong.

If they had studied his public attitudes they might—but they couldn't, reason had gone to sleep—have realized that he had always stood above the battles. He could not have become a partisan if he had tried. In one sense, he was totally detached. In another, he felt an absolute duty to his fellow men. Antonia Vallentin says with accuracy that spiritually he was free of all chains, but morally he was bound by them. He loved his solitude—"painful when one is young, but delightful when one is more mature": but still, the more so as he became world-famous, he knew his duty. "The concern for man and his destiny must always be the chief interest of all technical effort. Never forget it among your diagrams and equations." Later he said: "Only a life lived for others is worthwhile."

In the 20's, life had still not quite sobered him. He went about the world, sockless, rather like an itinerant musician. Everyone, including himself, complained about the ordeals of publicity. Here for once, I register a dissenting vote. There was a streak in him, major prophet though he was, which enjoyed the photographers and the crowds. He had an element, as I have indicated before, of the exhibitionist and the ham, coexisting with his spiritual grandeur. If there had not been that element, there would have been no photographers and no crowds. Nothing is easier to avoid than publicity. If one genuinely doesn't want it, one doesn't get it. Einstein was under no compulsion to travel round the world. If he had retired—it would have been perfectly practicable—to his birthplace in Swabia, he could have reveled in obscurity.

* To a Gentile, his moral thinking often seems strongly Judaic.

But he didn't. Some of his remarks about publicity in the 20's sounded, as usual, like the Old Testament. But—much more than we think in our rationalizations—what you want is what happens to you.

That wasn't true, though, on the world scene. He had always been more realistic than most men about German politics: he knew the violence seething underneath the Weimar state. As soon as Hitler took power, Einstein was quicker than any politician to judge what was going to happen. International pacifism, the world community, intellectual cooperation—all his hopes had to be put aside. He was much quicker than Churchill to recognize that the Nazi Reich had to be put down by force.

He was himself Hitler's greatest public enemy. He was out of Germany when Hitler became chancellor: he was a brave man, but he knew that if he returned, he would be killed. Through most of 1933 he lived in the little Flemish seaside town of Den Haan (Coq-sur-mer). There he kept a kind of intellectual court for refugees. Den Haan was temporarily the capital of the German-speaking scientific world. Incidentally, it is the most agreeable village on the Flanders coast, and they have a pleasant custom of naming streets after great men—Shakespeare *laan,* Dante *laan,* Rembrandt *laan,* and so on. But they haven't yet named a street after their most illustrious resident.

Belgium suited him. He was more comfortable in small cozy countries (Holland was his favorite), but he wasn't safe from the Nazis. Unwillingly, he set off on his travels again, went to Princeton, and stayed there until he died.

It was a kind of exile. There is no doubt that he, who had never recognized any place as home, sometimes longed for the sounds and smells of Europe. Nevertheless, it was in America that he reached his full wisdom and his full sadness. His wife died soon after he got there. His younger son, back in Switzerland, had gone into a mental home. His merriness had finally been worn away. He was left with his duty to other men.

He was left with something else, too. He could still lose his personality, forget everything else, in speculating about the natural world. That was the deepest root of his existence: it remained strong until the night before he died. He once said in public: "Whoever finds a thought which enables us to obtain a slightly deeper glimpse into the eternal secrets of nature, has been given great grace." He continued—that was the grace of his solitariness—to try to find such thoughts. Quite unlike Newton, who gave up physics entirely in order to become Master of the Mint and perform textual researches on the Bible, Einstein stayed working at science long after most theoreticians, even the best, have taken to something easier. But he worked—and this was the final strangeness of his life—in a direction precisely opposite to that

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of his major colleagues. In the public world, against militarism, against Hitler, against cruelty and unreason, nothing had ever made him budge. In the private world of theoretical physics, with the same quiet but total intransigence, he would not budge against the combined forces of the colleagues he loved, Bohr, Born, Dirac, Heisenberg, the major intellects in his own profession.

They believed that the fundamental laws were statistical—that, when it came to quantum phenomena, in Einstein's picturesque phrase, God had to play at dice. He believed in classical determination—that, in the long run, it should be possible to frame one great field theory in which the traditional concept of causality would re-emerge. Year after year he explained and redefined his position.

To Carl Seelig: "I differ decisively in my opinions about the fundamentals of physics from nearly all my contemporaries, and therefore I cannot allow myself to act as spokesman for theoretical physicists. In particular, I do not believe in the necessity for a statistical formulation of the laws."

To Max Born: "I can quite well understand why you take me for an obstinate old sinner, but I feel clearly that you do not understand how I came to travel my lonely way. It would certainly amuse you, although it would be impossible for you to appreciate my attitude. I should also have great pleasure in tearing to pieces your positivistic-philosophical viewpoint."

To James Franck: "I can, if the worst comes to the worst, still realize that God may have created a world in which there are no natural laws. In short, a chaos. But that there should be statistical laws with definite solutions, i.e., laws which compel God to throw the dice in each individual case, I find highly disagreeable."

God does *not* play at dice, he kept saying. But, though he worked at it for nearly forty years, he never discovered his unified field theory. And it is true that his colleagues, who passionately venerated him, sometimes thought that he was "an obstinate old sinner." They believed that he had misspent half the mental lifetime of the most powerful intellect alive. They felt they had lost their natural leader.

The arguments on both sides are most beautiful and subtle. Unfortunately, they cannot be followed without some background of physics: otherwise, Bohr's *Discussion on Epistemological Problems* and Einstein's *Reply* ought to be part of everyone's education. No more profound intellectual debate has ever been conducted—and, since they were both men of the loftiest spirit, it was conducted with noble feeling on both sides. If two men are going to disagree, on the subject of most ultimate concern to them both, then that is the way to do it. It is a pity that the debate, because of its nature, can't be common currency.

Perhaps I can, by an analogy, suggest the effect on Einstein's colleagues of his one-man counter-revolution. It was rather as though Picasso, about 1920, at the height of his powers, had announced that some new kind of representational painting alone could be made to contain the visual truth; and had spent the rest of his life industriously but unavailingly trying to find it.

The great debate did not reach its peak until Einstein was old, years after the war. It was never resolved. He and Bohr, with mutual admiration, drew intellectually further apart. In fact, though, when I met Einstein in 1937 he had already separated himself totally, and as it proved, finally, from the other theorists.

I HAD ALREADY shaken hands with him once or twice at large gatherings. That summer, I happened to be in America, and my friend Leopold Infeld, who was collaborating with Einstein at the time, suggested that I might like to spend a day with him.

It turned out to be an abnormally hot day, even for a New York summer. The seats were hot in the car, as Infeld, a woman friend, and I drove out to Long Island. We had a snack by way of lunch, and aimed at arriving at one o'clock. Actually, we turned up late. Einstein had taken a house for the summer, since sailing remained one of his continuing pleasures. Infeld had not been there: no one in the neighborhood knew where Einstein was living, nor apparently had the slightest idea who he was. Infeld, not the most patient of men, was getting distinctly cross. We had no telephone number. Finally we had to ring back to Princeton, track down one of the Institute's secretaries (which wasn't easy, because it was either a Saturday or a Sunday), and get directions. At last we made it, three-quarters of an hour later.

Not that that mattered to Einstein. He was amiable to all visitors, and I was just one of many. He came into the sitting-room a minute or two after we arrived. There was no furniture apart from some garden chairs and a small table. The window looked out on to the water, but the shutters were half closed to keep out the heat. The humidity was very high.

At close quarters, Einstein's head was as I had imagined it: magnificent, with a humanizing touch of the comic. Great furrowed forehead; aureole of white hair; enormous bulging chocolate eyes. I can't guess what I should have expected from such a face if I hadn't known. A shrewd Swiss once said it had the brightness of a good artisan's countenance, that he looked like a reliable old-fashioned watchmaker in a small town who perhaps collected butterflies on a Sunday.

What did surprise me was his physique. He had come in from sailing and was wearing nothing but a pair of shorts. It was a massive body, very heavily muscled: he was running to fat round the midriff and in the upper arms, rather like a foot-

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baller in middle-age, but he was still an unusually strong man. He was cordial, simple, utterly unshy. The large eyes looked at me, as though he was thinking: what had I come for, what did I want to talk about? Infeld, not only a man of distinguished intellect, but sharp-witted, set to work to find topics, as he went on doing through the afternoon and evening ahead. I was a friend of G. H. Hardy, Infeld began. Einstein smiled with pleasure. Yes, a fine man. Then, quite sharply, he asked me: was Hardy still a pacifist? I replied, as near as made no matter.

"I do not understand," he said somberly, "how such a fine man can be so unrealistic."

Then he wanted to know if I also was a pacifist. Far from it, I explained. I was by that time certain that war was inevitable. I was not so much apprehensive about war, as about the chance that we might lose it. Einstein nodded. About politics that afternoon, he and I and Infeld were united. About politics in the widest sense, I don't think there has been a world figure in my time who has been wiser than Einstein. He wasn't much interested in political techniques, and brushed them off too lightly: but his major insights into the world situation, and his major prophecies, have proved more truthful than those of anyone else.

The hours went on. I have a hazy memory that several people drifted in and out of the room, but I do not remember who they were. Stifling heat. There appeared to be no set time for meals. He was already, I think, eating very little, but he was still smoking his pipe. Trays of open sandwiches —various kinds of wurst, cheese, cucumber—came in every now and then. It was all casual and Central European. We drank nothing but soda water. What with the heat and the sandwiches, I got as thirsty as if I had been dehydrated, and drank more soda water in eight hours then I normally did in eight months.

Mostly we talked of politics, the moral and practical choices in front of us, and what could be saved from the storm to come, not only for Europe but for the human race. All the time he was speaking with a weight of moral experience which was different, not only in quantity but in kind, from anything I had met. By this time he had lost any intrusion from his own ego, as though it had never existed. It was something like talking to the second Isaiah.

IT WOULD BE easy to give a false impression. In the face of someone so different from the rest of us, it was hard not to get one. In fact, he was neither sentimental nor illusioned. His view of life was not illusioned at all. It was far darker than that of his great friend, Paul Langevin. Einstein thought that we should be lucky if the human race was going to stand a chance: but nevertheless, as an absolute moral imperative, we had to do what little we could until we dropped.

Infeld, who knew him better than anyone at this period, later wrote—and it seems to me precisely true:

> This "conscience of the world" [Einstein] nurses a deep repugnance for all types of boastfulness, terrorizing of one's fellow-men, and overbearing brutality. One could, therefore, easily have been tempted to portray him as an oversensitive man, who trembles at the very mention of injustice and violence. This picture would be utterly false. I know no one who leads such a lonely and solitary life as he. His great benevolence, his absolute integrity, and his social ideas, despite all appearances to the contrary, are thoroughly impersonal and seem to come from another planet. His heart does not bleed, his eyes do not weep.

And yet, he had suffered much, in a way difficult for more ego-bound men to understand. I had heard a lot about his old merriness. That had all disappeared, and forever. Just once in eight hours I heard the great laugh of his young manhood come rumbling out. It was at a curious turn in the conversation. He had been speaking of the countries he had lived in. He preferred them, he said, in inverse proportion to their size. How did he like England? I asked. Yes, he liked England. It had some of the qualities of his beloved Holland. After all, by world standards, England was becoming a small country. We talked of the people he had met, not only of the scientists but the politicians. Churchill. Einstein admired him. I said that progressives of my kind wanted him in the government as a token of resistance: this was being opposed, not so much by the Labour party, but by Churchill's own Tories. Einstein was brooding. To defeat Nazism, he said, we should need every kind of force, including nationalism, that we could bring together.

Then, because there wasn't much useful to say, I asked why, when he left Germany, he hadn't come to live in England.

"No, no!" said Einstein.

Why not?

"It is your style of life." Suddenly he had begun to laugh. "It is a splendid style of life. But it is not for me."

He was enjoying some gigantic joke. But I was puzzled. What was this mysterious "style of life"? It appeared that, on his first day in England, he had been taken to a great country house. A butler. Evening dress. Einstein had never worn a dinner jacket in his life. Then Lindemann had taken him in to dinner at Christ Church. More butlers. More evening dress. Einstein chortled. He seemed to have the fixed idea that the English, or certainly the English professional classes, spent much of their time getting in and out of formal clothes. Any protests I made (did he think Hardy lived like that?) were swept aside. It was then that he introduced me to the word *Zwang*. No *Zwang* for him. No butlers. No evening dress.

That was my single glimpse of what he might

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have been like in Switzerland thirty years before. But he did say something which may have been, though I cannot be sure, more personal. It was much later in the day, and getting dark outside. Einstein was talking about the conditions for a creative existence. He said that, in his experience, the best creative work is never done when one is unhappy. He could scarcely think of any physicist who had done fine work in such a state. Or any composer. Or any writer.

It seemed a strange and unexpected remark.

The only exception he could think of, Einstein went on, was Bohr, who had produced his great paper on the hydrogen spectrum when in deep misery.

Neither Infeld nor I knew that. Einstein was speaking of his famous contemporaries, a generation before our time. I pulled myself together, and suggested Tolstoy when writing *Anna Karenina*. He had been in a state of profound despair. Einstein was interested. Tolstoy was one of his favorite writers. Just as his taste in physics, and his feeling for the nature of the physical laws, were classical, so was his taste in art. He detested romantic art, in particular German romantic art. He didn't like subjectivism. We talked about books. The novel he valued most of all was *The Brothers Karamazov*. Then Einstein came back to his thoughts upon the creative life. His great head was shaking to and fro:

"No, to understand the world one must not be worrying about oneself."

BACK IN New York, late that night, I found those remarks of his about happiness jumbling with others. At that time I knew little about his own life: I did not know then, and still don't know, whether what he said had any personal relevance. But if it had, it may have been drawn from memories of his own two major creative periods. The first produced the great papers of 1905: he was not long married, his first son was born. I am inclined to fancy that, despite some accounts of those early years, that marriage began by being happy. About his second major period, nearly all the evidence agrees. Despite the war, he was joyous: his cousin Elsa had lifted a burden from him: almost at once he had the transcendental scientific experience of his life.

It was, I think, in that same Long Island house, two years later, that Einstein signed the well-known letter to Roosevelt about the possibility of an atomic bomb. But this event, as I mentioned before, has been wildly melodramatized. Einstein was a mythopoeic character. Some of the myths are true and significant; this myth, though factually true, is not significant.

Let me try to clear the ground. First, Einstein's work had nothing to do either with the discovery or the potential use of nuclear fission. From the moment of the Meitner-Frisch paper in January 1939 (as Niels Bohr said at the time, everyone ought to have seen the meaning of Hahn's 1938 experiments much earlier—"we were all fools"), nuclear fission was a known fact to all physicists in the field. Second, the possible use of nuclear energy had been speculated about long before Einstein produced the equation $E = mc^2$. After the fission experiments, it would have been empirically apparent if there had been no theory at all. Every nuclear physicist in the world—and a good many non-nuclear physicists—was talking about the conceivability of a nuclear bomb from early 1939 onward. Third, all responsible nuclear physicists wanted to bring this news to their governments as effectively as they could. It happened in England months *before* the Einstein letter was signed. Fourth, a group of refugee scientists in America (Szilard, Wigner, Teller, Fermi) had no direct channels of communication with the White House. Very sensibly, they explained the position to Einstein. It was easy for him to understand. A letter drafted by them, signed by him, handed on by Sachs (an economist with an entry to the President) would get straight to Roosevelt. "I served as a pillar box," said Einstein. It was signed on Long Island on July 2: it did not reach Roosevelt until October 11. Fifth, if this letter had not been sent, similar messages would have been forced on Roosevelt. For some time *after* the letter, the Americans were much slower off the mark than the English. Peierls's (he was then a professor at Birmingham) calculations, which showed that the bomb was a possibility, were ready by mid-1940. These had, in historical fact, a major effect upon the American scientists. Sixth, in July 1939 there was—unless one was an unqualified pacifist—no moral dilemma. Everyone was afraid that the Nazis would get the bomb first. If so, they would rule the world. It was as simple as that. It was as simple to Einstein as to the crudest of men.

It is a pity that the story of the letter has obscured the genuine moral dilemma of his later years. Which was—now that the bomb exists, what should a man do? He probably knew little or nothing of the actual development of the bomb. He was not one of the Franck group (once again, organized by Leo Szilard) who protested in advance against its military use on Japan. He was not one, simply because he did not know that the bomb was as good as made. When the first bomb was dropped on Hiroshima, he said simply, "*Oh weh!*" (Oh horrible!) Nothing would convince him that Hiroshima was forgivable, either in moral or practical terms: just as nothing has convinced many of us, with all the information of the twenty subsequent years, and with our knowledge of how the world has gone.

The bomb was made. What should a man do? He couldn't find an answer which people would listen to. He campaigned for a world state: that only made him distrusted both in the Soviet Union and in the United States. He gave an es-

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chatological warning to a mass television audience in 1950:

> And now the public has been advised that the production of the hydrogen bomb is the new goal which will probably be accomplished. An accelerated development towards this end has been solemnly proclaimed by the President. If these efforts should prove successful, radioactive poisoning of the atmosphere, and, hence, annihilation of all life on earth, will have been brought within the range of what is technically possible. *A weird aspect of this development lies in its apparently inexorable character. Each step appears as the inevitable consequence of the one that went before.* And at the end, looming ever clearer, lies general annihilation.

That speech made him more distrusted in America. As for practical results, no one listened. Incidentally, in the view of most contemporary military scientists, it would be more difficult totally to eliminate the human species than Einstein then believed. But the most interesting sentences were the ones I have italicized. They are utterly true. The more one has mixed in these horrors, the truer they seem.

He joined in other warnings, one of them signed in the last week of his life. He did not expect them to bite: he retained the hope of his strong spirit, but intellectually he seems to have had no hope at all.

He was physically a strong man. He was in spirit as strong as a man can be. He was used to being solitary. "It is strange," he wrote, "to be known so universally and yet to be so lonely." Never mind. He was isolated in his search for the unified field. And the latter was the great theme of his life. He could endure it all, impregnable, and work stoically on. He said: "One must divide one's time between politics and equations. But our equations are much more important to me."

FROM HIS late sixties until his death at seventy-six he was continuously ill—from what appears to have been a variety of causes, an intestinal growth, a disease of the liver, finally a weakening of the aorta wall. He lived on in discomfort, and often in acute pain. He stayed cheerful, serene, detached from his own illness and the approach of death. He worked on. The end of his life was neither miserable nor pathetic. "Here on earth I have done my job," he said, without self-pity.

By his bedside, one Sunday night, lay some pages of manuscript. They included more equations leading to the unified field theory, which he had never found. He hoped to be enough out of pain the next day to work on them. Early in the morning the aortic blister broke, and he died.

Good, gentle, wise, Hardy called him that day at Fenner's. At the time I wanted to add another word. If we were having the conversation again, I think I should have chosen a clumsy one. Of all the men I have heard of, this one was—in any sense I can imagine, intellectual, emotional, spiritual—the most unbudgeable.

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Father of The Yiddish Theater

In the vast Yiddish-speaking Pale of Eastern Europe, the Hassidim frowned on the stage as immoral. Abraham Goldfaden disagreed. He considered Theater a legitimate means of bringing light into the dreary lives of his fellows, and he determined to start one.

Since there was no body of drama written in the common language, he had to start from scratch, writing plays and musicals, training actors, directing and stage-managing, even painting scenery and choosing costumes. With no models to follow, he had to create his own forms and techniques, appropriate to a simple culture which had hardly progressed since the 17th Century.

Jewish audiences responded immediately. By 1879 Jewish theaters emulating his productions were springing up in all major cities. He turned to the glories of the past for material and composed operettas that would foster the spirit of self-respect and opposition to tyranny.

When he came to New York in 1883, he found his fellow immigrants slaving at low wages and living in squalid poverty, unable to escape the dreary monotony of their lives. Lost to the language and mores of the Broadway stage, they embraced Goldfaden's ideas with delight, and the New York Yiddish Theater blossomed. It developed remarkable artistic merit and culminated in the Yiddish Art Theater and the works of such giants as Sholem Asch and I. J. Singer.

Through the development of the Yiddish Theatre, Goldfaden brought hope and pleasure to countless people; and left a great legacy—the host of Jewish playwrights, actors and producers who enrich the theater today.

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MEYER LIBEN

BALL OF FIRE

A Story

ELEVEN YEARS AGO—I remember the date because of an occurrence which is not pertinent to this account—an old friend, that is, someone who used to be an old friend ("he used to be a very good ex-friend of mine") mentioned the name *Oblomov.* I had heard the name before; its mention now (eleven years ago) struck a chord familiar but unclear. I knew, for example, that the name related to a book, but I was not sure whether Oblomov was the title of the book or the name of the author. I knew it to be the name of a person rather than a place, and so if it *were* the name of the book, would refer (presumably) to the main character in that book. Because of the Paperback Revolution (which I will come to in a moment), my readers undoubtedly know that *Oblomov* is the title of a book, even that he is the main character in that book. It is not unusual, by the way, for the title of a book (even where the author is known) to be more familiar to the public than the name of that author. Is not *Don Quixote* better known than Cervantes? And would it be *too* surprising if, say five hundred years from now, *Hamlet* were better known than Shakespeare? Explanations take one far afield, but this phenomenon—of the created object becoming more memorable than the creator—has some bearing on the value that mankind puts on the process of creation. So many worship the world over the God who made it, forgetting His name. But explanations take one far afield.

A little more than a century and-a-half after the French Revolution came the Paperback Revolution. Books that you could buy for a quarter, put in your pocket, read on train or bench, and then throw away if you felt like it, now began to sell for $2.45, and mostly too big to fit a pocket. That was the Paperback Revolution. True, all sorts of books began to be published (Out-of-Prints, Hard-to-Gets, and so on), and among these books was *Oblomov.* There were dozens of copies of the book in a store in which I was browsing, for the economics of the situation demanded that these books be printed in five, even six figures. At any rate, I bought a copy. (There is no better price in buying more than one copy.) Though my ex-old friend had praised the book rapturously, he had not offered to lend it to me, and I did not ask to borrow it, because I am the kind of person who finds it difficult to return books and does not like to be asked for them, which the admirer of *Oblomov* never hesitated to do. I remember asking for the book along Fourth Avenue (the one they have not yet succeeded in calling Park Avenue South, at least they have not succeeded in having people call it Park Avenue South), but the booksellers had never heard of it, or it was out of stock, out of print, and so time wore on and I more or less forgot about the book, which joined that group of books which one plans to read. Many books are praised, and, generally speaking, books praised by those who know what they are talking about should be read, and the recommendations of friends are generally more interesting than the recommendations of reviewers and critics. One thing leads to another, circumstances and situations change, there came the Paperback Revolution, and I bought *Oblomov,* at an airport newsstand, where the choice of books is beyond understanding, almost beyond confusion. I was on my way to St. Louis on a business trip.

I STARTED to read the book on the plane, and after a few chapters, I fell asleep. That was the perfect physiological, even aesthetic reaction to this work, and I am sure the author, I forget his name at the moment, would have been pleased at my behavior. I do not mean that he was a propagandist for somnolence, but he surely saw it as a kind of Lesser Evil.

To those of you who are acquainted with this book, the idea of reading it in a jet plane, traveling at a speed of five hundred miles an hour, is preposterous enough. I do not want to spoil the work for those who have not yet read it ("don't tell me how it ends"), but I can't be giving much away by pointing out that Oblomov is of the essence of inertia, procrastination, the very apotheosis of ennui—that French neurological ailment—of a kind of golden boredom. Not altogether to my surprise, I discovered in the introduction, before I fell asleep, that "Oblomovism" has a generic meaning in the Soviet Union, that the

MEYER LIBEN contributed "CCNY—A Memoir" to our September 1965 issue. The present story will be included in *Justice Hunger,* a book of Mr. Liben's fiction which Dial Press will publish later this month.

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theoretician, Bukharin (I am not quite sure whether he has achieved post-humorous, that is, posthumous retaliation, I mean rehabilitation, or not), used the word in criticizing the bureaucracy.

True, sleep was an ideal bit of criticism, but I was exhausted too, for I'd been on a very rough schedule for weeks. I am a keen contender in our famed rat-race, but understand the importance of the cat nap, which is one of the marks of the successful man of affairs. Because of the time elapsed and the intensity involved, this sleep of mine turned out to be much longer than the typical cat nap. Indeed, I was plainly asleep, and it was the instruction of the stewardess—a charming girl with a delicate Irish accent, from Kerry maybe or the Aran Islands themselves—"safety belts on, we're about to land," that woke me from my stupor, which is to sleep what sleep is to a cat nap. We were circling over the landing field, and it was quite a beautiful sight. This was a night flight; I had completed a busy day, and my appointment in St. Louis was for nine in the morning. It would have been more sensible to leave earlier in the day, but the press of business forbade. I could have taken the train, too, slept the night in pullman or roomette, but the fact is that I travel *only* by plane, become very restless in the slower vehicles of communication. The sight of the city not-quite-asleep was impressive, to say nothing of the circling lights, those searchlight rays on the field itself. My plan was to get right to the hotel and go to bed, and that I did. However, I was not able to fall asleep (because of the long nap, or short sleep, on the plane), so I picked up the *Oblomov* book again. But it was not a good choice, because the author writes so engagingly of somnolence, one becomes entranced (my sleep on the plane was due, basically, to exhaustion); the way a master describer of the state of boredom puts the reader in a state of excited awareness.

Oblomov does not like to move, he has plans that he shelves, he gets into ridiculous arguments with his manservant about this detail or that, he thinks of his house and serfs in the province, of work that must be done, of letters that must be written (the way they had to be written yesterday and the day before). He smiles and falls back in a benign coma of indifferentism—one of the better kinds of coma. This is a task that can wait—if not today, tomorrow will do just as well. Here is a task that *must* be taken care of immediately, he lifts up his pen, is baffled by the demands of grammar, sentence-structure, puts down his pen, the message loses its urgency, it too can be put off till tomorrow (but no later!). He is happily somnolent again, has made a clear decision to procrastinate, a powerful exertion of will, something to be proud of. How nice that matters can wait, and then, if they wait long enough, can be forgotten. Oblomov dozes, dreams cozily of a shelter, a utopian childhood, but I realize—there in that St. Louis bed—that I have neglected some necessary work, work that I should have taken care of on the plane, that I had *planned* to take care of on the plane, but instead I had started to read the book, and then the cat nap had turned into a nap, and the nap into the genuine article. . . . I leaned over and picked up my briefcase, which I always keep at the side of my bed, just in case I should wake up in the middle of the night with a business thought which I might have to check against the figures, for if one goes back to sleep, it is difficult, in the morning, to remember just what it was you thought, you might forget a given number, or the commercial complex in which the number has a meaning, and these night-thoughts, so often forgotten, can be the most significant ones, so I have trained myself to wake, jot down the thought or number, and go right back to sleep. I don't require much sleep anyway. Thomas Edison's four hours are about my speed, too much sleep dazes me, puts me at a disadvantage for the exigencies of the day. I took the papers out of my briefcase and began to work on them.

THEN, before I knew it—I am among those who generally *know* when they are falling asleep—I fell asleep. I fell *off* into sleep with a suddenness which would have surprised me had I known that I was doing it. Then I went immediately into a dream which proved to me, even while dreaming, that I had read *Oblomov*, all of it, and very likely before it had been so highly recommended to me. There was Olga, in the dream, and Andrei Stolz (my somewhat altered ego), the not-very-bright, selfless Agafya, her villainous brother, Ivan—all these, and others, appearing not at all according to the contours of the book, but in my own form of distribution. And, this night, on the plane, I had only read to a point where some of these characters had not even appeared! So I had either read the book before, or, in the dream, created characters similar, names and all, to those in the book. A quick look at the book, past my place-mark, showed me that the names I had dreamed were indeed the names of the people in the book, that I had not, as we say, dreamed them "up."

I do not consider myself a mystical personality, I stayed with the laws of probability, and the overwhelming evidence was that I had read the book before and forgotten that I had read it. Either it had had no effect on me, or more likely, it had had a powerful effect which I was interested in burying. But now the return had come in a dream. I moved (in the dream) among those maddeningly familiar figures in an atmosphere of anxiety. Oblomov was sadly reclining, removing himself from life's responsibilities, from its pettiness, coldness, and horrors. And there was Stolz, running through Europe like a madman, promoting one deal and another. I saw him in Prague, around a conference table (one of those

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covered with green baize, in fact it was a pool table), driving home a point, for the deal was in the balance, the crushing point had to be made. It was just then that I awoke, and looked at my travel-clock, with its phosphorescent face. The time was ten after two, and I was wide awake.

Then I did something quite unprecedented (for me). I got out of bed, dressed, and went downstairs to the hotel bar. I had stopped in this hotel before, and knew its bar. Had it been necessary to leave the hotel in order to get to a bar, I should probably not have dressed and left the room, because it was chilly out, but since there was a bar in the hotel I did not hesitate for a moment, and made my way down there. I felt that a change of scene might help me to think more clearly, and I did want to understand why Oblomov had been so completely erased from my mind; the fact is that I knew perfectly well, but wanted the comfort of whisky and a few strangers.

There were a few strangers down there, a precious few (as though a remnant, and therefore precious) and given the day (Monday), and the hour (already given), that was no surprise. There was a moody chap in the corner—they do tend to move to the corners—and a couple of men, either friends who had nothing much to say to one another (either because they never had, or out of exhaustion of the subject), or men who had met for the first time that night, and now had nothing much left to say to one another. At the one occupied table behind me a man and woman were discussing personal matters in rather loud voices —"You never did love me," "Don't tell *me* who to marry." It was warm, and comfortable, the way I had expected it to be.

The thing is—did I need this whisky to tell it to me?—that I am by nature indolent; to this day I must make an effort to get up in the morning, to get started. Once moving, I never stop, my reputation as a ball of fire is well deserved. But I move, as do so many of us who do not know the meaning of change of pace, out of anxiety, out of a fear that if I don't start I'll never move, that if I don't move I'll never start, and if I don't keep moving I'll just stay put. As a kid, I was as lazy as they came, returned from school (on days that I wasn't able to beg off, feign illness, etc.) and liked nothing better than to lie down, with a book or magazine—something to incite my dreams —and spend the afternoon that way. My mother often tried to get me out of the house. I was, and remain, an only child, and she was pretty busy during the day, didn't mind having someone in the house, but at the same time she had my interest at heart, made efforts to get me out, where I could move around, mix in the life of the street, that perpetual movement from which I recoiled. Out on the street—for my mother sometimes struck a kind of insistent note which I was bound to obey—I usually ended up sitting on the stoop steps, or on the curb (as a last resort, for there was no support for the back), watching the mad whirl. I never wanted to be chosen in, the kids after a while didn't want to choose me in, accepted my laziness, not without jibe and stricture, but now and then, out of desperation, where an extra man was essential, I was forced into the action, to the chagrin of the team to which I was assigned. I was not the stuff out of which the immortal heroes of the playing fields are made. My Eton would have led to *our* Waterloo. I was lazy in school, too, kept looking out the windows toward the freedom, not of movement in far places, but the freedom to dream undisturbed, for here in class I was sometimes brought up sharply, by the insistent, even the insolent questionings of the teacher. . . .

My father worked hard, six days a week, often not arriving home till late at night, and he took it pretty easy on Sundays. At first he used not to be upset by my Sunday indolence, thinking maybe I needed rest, the way he certainly did. He wasn't looking for trouble, but then things began to get to him—remarks by the neighbors, made directly or overheard, a note from the school which he happened to see, though my mother tried to protect him from these difficulties. One day, he came home early from work, and found me fast asleep. Another day, he watched in amazement from our apartment window as I sat dreamily on the stoop steps, watching a punchball game from which I had artfully extricated myself. I had to explain to my father that I had come out into the street late (homework to do), after the sides had been chosen. I was getting to be kind of fat, something hard to imagine if you look at me today.

Well, my father slowly came to understand what was going on, and finally he raised the roof. He accused my mother of protecting me, indulging me, said I would become a drone, a parasite, and they got into a furious fight, my mother taking a position which she didn't altogether believe, that I had my own special way of doing things, that not all kids were alike, more about "specialness." "No kid of mine is going to turn into a bum!" he shouted, "I'll see to that." Since I was his only child, he must have been referring to me. And he certainly did see to it. He had to get up before I did, but he made sure that I was up and dressed before he left the house. When he came home, he demanded to see my homework, cuffed me sharply if he was not pleased, was not averse to putting the belt to me. He wanted to know how I had spent the day, and applied the corrective measures if he didn't like what he heard, or didn't believe what I told him. That went on for six months, maybe a year, and it certainly got me moving. I haven't stopped since. And all on my own, too, for I have up to now avoided marriage.

So it was not difficult to understand my forgetting Oblomov. It was a fear of returning to that old indolence, those golden hours of forgetfulness,

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all that avoidance of growth and responsibility, which the author of *Oblomov* has so unforgettably described. That is one way to develop hot shots, demon salesmen, promoters, wheelers & dealers, operators forever on the way, that is one of the elements in the creation of the rat-race, the orgy of restlessness with which we are all too familiar.

I suppose Oblomov is a kind of secret hero of mine; one must admire the courage, so to say, of his laziness, to say nothing of the lovable qualities with which his creator endowed him—his sweetness, his innocence, his absolutely unconniving nature, his loyalty, his infinite trust.

Not difficult, I thought, to understand why it was that I had read a book, forgotten that I had read it, and then realized (through the mechanism of a dream) that I had indeed read that book. But, for the life of me (though my life was not at stake in the matter), I could not remember when. I no longer had a copy of that book (could I have loaned it to the friend who had so unreservedly recommended it to me?), couldn't remember the shape, the texture, the color, or binding of it. Was it a library book? Maybe. But what difference did it make? Yet, I was puzzled. One doesn't like to imagine that whole areas of experience have disappeared, like islands into a sea. Why, I thought, that is a kind of death, to unremember what it is that has happened; it makes experience unreal, almost meaningless, means that what I am doing now may well be forgotten, that this moment at the bar, trying to remember, may itself disappear. And why shouldn't it be forgotten? Do you call this experience? Here, a stranger among strangers? The couple at the table behind me were making a phony effort at reconciliation. It was probably because the man (maybe husband) wanted a little action in bed, that he was coming to agree to matters in which he didn't have much interest, meaning: we're together, we're friends. What if they were making a phony effort at reconciliation? I mean what difference did it make whether these strangers got along or didn't? Somebody else's experience. We oughtn't to live off the experiences of others. The moral note.

It was pretty late, and I had to get up pretty early. The fact is that it is not easy for me to get up in the morning. I have trained myself to let the alarm wake me, but at the moment of waking there is a powerful urge to return to sleep. Now this is not uncommon, and we most of us give in to another few minutes' sleep. These tend to be the most delicious moments. But my habit is to throw the covers off immediately and jump out of bed as though there were a demon beside me. There is such a demon, the imp of indolence, urging me to return to dream, to the softness of bed and sheet, to the warmth and darkness. Prenatal, you say, and I would not deny it. But I am a true son of the West, my father saw to it, I am deaf to the siren murmur of prenatality, to the charm of Oblomovism, but at the same time I take no chances, and go right for the cold shower (nothing like a cold shower to destroy the morning remnants of prenatality), rub myself vigorously, look out the window to see what the weather has in store for me, so that I may choose from my carefully chosen wardrobe. Of course, the weather is only one element in this choice—it is more a matter of who it is I am going to see, the impression I feel I ought to make, and so on. Then downstairs for a quick but nourishing breakfast (for I have come to believe what the sellers of breakfast foods want me to believe, that breakfast is a key meal, sets me up for the day). Many a day I have completed my business in the first hours of the morning, taking advantage perhaps of the somnolence of the man across the table; the sleep is still in his eyes, I lay out the papers, I talk fast, convincingly, his mind is off somewhere, he is shaking out the night-memories, the night-horrors, and I am fresh as a daisy—the shower has paid off, also the brisk rubdown, the intelligent breakfast.

But here—in this bar—it is close to three in the morning, and I am not sleepy. I must be up at eight in the morning. How nice it would be if I could sleep through the day. And then I hear Stolz say: "Where are you? What have you become? You must come to your senses! Is this the life you prepared yourself for—to sleep like a mole in a burrow?"

But why is Stolz talking to me this way? Why is he saying that "in another four years there will be a railroad station" [where the estate was] "and that your peasants will be working on the line, your grain will be carried by rail to the landing stage? And after that school education. . . ."

My peasants—what an idea. I, who log seventy or eighty thousand miles a year of air travel! Well, of course, Stolz is not talking to me, he is talking to Oblomov, thinking about Oblomov; it is time for me to get to bed, for I have a rough day ahead. How come that ex-old friend, that old ex-friend, hadn't offered me a copy of *Oblomov* (assuming, of course, that he hadn't borrowed the book from me in the first place)? Not too nice of him, was it? Water under the bridge, ships that pass in the night.

In reading a book where an "I" is telling a story, I have often wondered how it is that the writer expects his readers to believe that a person who is not a writer by profession should be able to write in such a persuasive, even brilliant manner. The narrator may be a worker, a farmer, a merchant, a lawyer, and yet (as in Dostoevsky) one is quite carried away by the style. The writer, of course, is acting, and we the readers must accept the double role—we know that there is a writer behind the farmer, and we more or less accept the convention, wondering meanwhile (for we forget that there is a writer behind the narrator) how a merchant, or a lawyer, could write in such a per-

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suasive, even brilliant manner. Sometimes the writer, recognizing that his narrator is not a professional author, tries to write clumsily, the way a farmer, or engineer, trying to be a writer, might write. But that effort at *complete* identity rarely works, it is somehow better when the writer treats the narrator as though he *were* a writer, recognizing that he is not a writer, doubling up, so to say, on the fiction.

Sometimes the "I" is the writer himself, writing in an autobiographical way, an as-if autobiographical way, an imaginative autobiographical way, and so on.

Sometimes, too, the "I" is indeed the writer himself, but he is not a professional writer, in the sense that he does not work steadily at writing (though all those who work steadily are not necessarily professionals). He can be one who "wants" to write, or a blocked writer, or a failed writer, or even what I believe the Italians have called a "ceased" writer, one who has tried and given up, who does not plan to return.

I bring these matters up because I am not a professional writer, though indeed like so many in my line of work, I fall among the as-ifs, the blocked, failed, and ceased. I am in the book business; yes, I am in that line (it is abundantly clear by my manner of expression that I am not a professional writer), am a salesman of books, and, as I've pointed out, a very successful one. I knock down 25, 30 G's a year, even more in an exceptionally good year. I suppose that I was drawn to the book business because I've always wanted to write, have worked up a few things on and off, but in a very sporadic way, and never with any sense of the work having any real worth. Unfortunately, I deal in classic texts a good deal, sell to the colleges and universities, so I am always comparing my work to the best (that may be an error, perhaps it is proper to compare your work to the best *you* can do). At any rate, I've faded away from writing, done nothing at all for ten years, but this Oblomov business somehow stirred up my writing interests, and I've been moved to set down these happenings.

I LEFT the bar just a few minutes before it closed (don't like to be in places when they close), and going through the lobby on my way to the elevators, I saw a great automatic book-vending machine, lit up like a jukebox. This machine was filled, it goes without saying, with paperbacks selling mostly for $2.45. The machine makes all manner of change (may even, for all I know, accept checks, money orders, letters of credit), and the book comes zooming down at you. It is not quite like picking a dusty book off a shelf in a used-book store. *That* book you can examine at your leisure and return. *This* book you must choose and buy before touching. No browsing here. And no way of returning it. How is it possible to return a book to a machine? The title *Literature and Revolution,* the author Leon Trotsky, caught my eye, caught both of them in fact. One of our serious competitors—I mean a competitor who publishes serious books—had issued this volume, which was not calculated, sales-wise, to make furrows on the brows of the publishers of Ian Fleming. I felt that I ought to read this book, and went to the hotel cashier, conveniently located near the machine, and got the necessary change, (for the change-mechanism on the machine looked tricky, and I prefer to do business with people). The book came down at a terrific speed, all fresh, new, absolutely sanitary. It seemed to me that the vending-machine manufacturers had missed a bet. Why not a strain of music corresponding to the work purchased?

I then went upstairs to my room (having first to waken the drowsy elevator man, slumped over his stool in the corner of the cab, next to the controls. In this hotel, the selling of books was automated before the elevator). I went into bed and glanced at the book I had just bought.

I was nine years old at the time of Trotsky's death, so he is for me a figure out of history. Any person about whom you have not read in the daily papers, where his current activities are described, is a figure out of history. Russian politics have never particularly intrigued me, but I was, of course, aware of the significant, even tragic role of this man. Some of my older friends have a passionate attachment to him, though they seem to have slowly given up any political allegiance, and even seem to have lost interest in his political position, or meaning. But I had heard a great deal about his literary style and verve, and I felt that he would create a dialectical opposition to the Oblomovism in whose quiet backwaters I was somewhat fearful of being immersed. A little too much of that immersion would make me a dead duck (by drowning) in my country, in my time.

I looked through the book idly, and there, sure enough, was the statement: "One has to put an end to the romanticism of Oblomov and Tolstoy's Karataiev."

I was not familiar with the name Karataiev, obviously not an outstanding fictional figure because the name of his author had to be mentioned. But the name Oblomov stood alone—no need there for the author's name.

Then, a little earlier in the book, this passage drew my attention, because it was what I wanted to read:

> Futurism is against mysticism, against the passive deification of nature, against the aristocratic and every other kind of laziness, against dreaminess, and against lachrymosity—and stands for scientific organization, for the machine, for planfulness, for willpower, for courage, for speed, for precision, and for the new man, who is armed with all these things.

True, true, just what I wanted to read, just what it was necessary for me to read, to avoid the

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perils of Oblomovism, this feudal swamp into which one can sink and vainly struggle, and slowly die. This was modernity, even "futurism," which I vaguely recognized as a literary movement of the past. Of course, there is no need for an American to struggle to write this way, for we have no tradition of Oblomovism. That is a social phenomenon, a laziness approaching sloth, even sloth itself; here laziness is an individual matter, not a social, nor even a group characteristic. In our business-world, the qualities of willpower, speed, precision, are taken for granted (only the word "courage" strikes an odd note). These qualities have been, so to say, internalized, and coming out in favor of such qualities would be, in the U.S.A., a tautological absurdity—if all tautologies are not absurd—telling people what they have been brought up not to believe but to live. Dreaminess and lachrymosity are not serious problems in our land, it is indeed the excesses of speed and precision that draw the criticism of some of our social observers.

But the Russians had Oblomovism to contend with, and after (even while) putting down the book, and turning off the bed-light, I thought of this problem as an individual, if not a social, hazard. There were hints of it in my own psyche, a tendency toward the vegetative.

THE ATTRACTION of Oblomov is, however, more than that of stupefaction and death, for he was, to repeat, a kind of hero—he was trusting, he recoiled from all conniving, the working of the angles, the sly washing of one another's hands, the subterfuges, the psychological elisions which go along with the speed and the scientific organization.

Yes, I thought, staring up at the hotel ceiling, hearing through the window (so I imagined) the flow of the mighty Mississippi, ours is a society of the morning, most of our work is done before noon, we rise swiftly from our beds at the sound of an alarm clock (think of it, having to be roused by an *alarm*), while Oblomov, fearful of this tricky morning speed, rose late and fell back, worried about those intricate responsibilities not yet internalized, then shaking off the worry in a species of somnolence, as though what is put off does not exist. He was a good fellow, ready to do anything for a friend, but seriously deficient in a sense of responsibility to the immediate. He almost achieved the responsibility of love, but not quite, and that drove him back to the fantasies and comforts of childhood, if not of prenatality. He found a wife who was also a mother—more a mother than a wife—an angelic creature, and she, in her own innocence, cradled him against the storms of reality. And so he died:

> However vigilantly the loving eye of his wife watched over every moment of his life, the perpetual peace and quiet, with one day sluggishly moving on to the next, gradually brought the mechanism of his life to a halt. Ilya Ilych apparently died without pain, without suffering, like a clock that stops because someone has forgotten to wind it. No one witnessed his last moments or heard his dying breath.

MY EYES CLOSED, the long day took its toll, I wooed sleep, found and conquered sleep, then fell into dream. I was in a pine glade, shady and warm, as comfortable as could be, half-asleep, looking up into a patch of blue sky. I had no place to go, nothing in prospect (I had in fact buried my appointment book deep in an unmarked place in the forest), I was quite unanxious about the passing of time. A little way through the woods was a lake, whose gray glint I could glimpse. Then I walked to that lake, which was frozen, and I skated on it, first gliding at my ease, then with mounting anxiety as the ice began to crack under me. "What an absurd mechanical dream," I thought to myself in my dream, very critical of my dream, as though I were a movie critic unhappy at what was being shown. Meanwhile, the ice continued to crack, very insistently, and I woke to the insistent demand of my alarm clock. I jumped out of bed and tore into the shower, rubbed myself vigorously, then swiftly dressed, for I wanted a good breakfast before my early appointment. I put the two books on the bureau, the one by Trotsky, the other, *Oblomov* (by Ivan Goncharov, translated by Ann Dunnigan, with a foreword by Harry T. Moore, a Signet Classic paperback, published by the New American Library, 1963. 95¢).

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China, Russia & the U.S.: I

OSCAR GASS

"For without friends no one would wish to live, though he had all other goods. . . . Friendship seems also to hold states together, and lawgivers care more for it than for justice; for unanimity seems to be something like friendship, and this they aim at most of all. . . .

". . . if there is a great interval in respect of virtue or vice or wealth or anything else between the parties, then they are no longer friends, and they do not even expect to be so."

—Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics* (1155[a], 1158[b]).

IN THESE NEXT years, a grave political and moral problem for the United States, in its relations with other countries, will be the absence of an equal—an equal in wealth, military power, and worldwide commitment.*

By these measures, China today is a small country. Her people still live close by hunger. Even in East Asia alone, China does not have anything like the relative military capacity which was possessed, a quarter century ago, by imperial Japan. Culturally and morally, she seems also—especially in recent months—to be again turning inward. And, at the beginning of 1967, China is politically isolated. No government accords her first friendship, except the government of primitive Albania. No foreign Communist party (as distinguished from a splinter group) stands firm to the Maoist allegiance, except the tiny party of New Zealand. What a falling off this is from the high expectations with which the Communist leadership, on October 1, 1949, proclaimed the People's Republic of China!

The USSR of 1967, while of greatly higher material capability than China, is still too remotely second to be named equal to the U.S. except by diplomatic amenity. Fifty years after the October Revolution, the Soviet Union (with nearly one-fifth more people than the United States) will have an aggregate national product only something like half the American. Each can work great nuclear military destruction—enough to make the initiation of total war a self-destroying act. But, in capacity for limited application of force, elsewhere than in the central Eurasian land mass, the USSR does not begin to approach the U.S. Moreover, wealth and force aside, it was once thought that the USSR might draw strength from the attraction of its model of a Communist society. But, in these latter years, the less advanced peoples have shown great aptitude for establishing their own unaffiliated authoritarianisms. And, among more advanced nations, the Leninist model of a socialism without guaranteed personal liberties and without competitive political parties is increasingly rejected, as a form of government unworthy of civilized men.

Looking back to 1945, and with the wisdom of retrospect, it seems clear that only one region of the world possessed most of the material and cultural foundations to become an equal to the U.S. This was Western Europe. But Western Europe has not made itself such an equal. Instead, it has combined major reliance on the U.S. for defense with steadily widening abstention from worldwide responsibilities. Today, a voice from Paris calls out the meretricious slogan of "Europe from the Atlantic to the Urals" and therewith sponsors a Europe of the political structure of the 19th century. And, even after de Gaulle has passed away, it seems unlikely that Western European association will soon develop beyond some further commercial affiliations. In the best case, this fragmented and abstentionist little Europe will not be an equal for a world power.

A DISTINGUISHED British scholar (and one who knows the United States well) found it appropriate, some years ago, to characterize dominant American outlooks on world affairs as affected by "the illusion of American omnipotence." It is a catchy phrase. I doubt, however, that the phrase conveys a correct description. I suspect that few Americans have held the conviction of American omnipotence for any considerable period during the past thirty years. Surely no such idea has ever been dominant in that place of mythical horrors—

* I have dealt with aspects of these questions which will not be repeated here in "German Unification" [COMMENTARY, July 1965, pp. 25-27 and 34]; "Britain under Socialism" [COMMENTARY, Feb. 1966, pp. 70-72]; and especially in "The World Politics of Responsibility" [COMMENTARY, Dec. 1965].

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the Pentagon—at any time since the building was put up. (It was Mr. Bertrand Russell, not Lieutenant General Puffedhead, who in 1948 urged that the United States employ the Western nuclear monopoly to take over the government of the earth.) True, in popular American thinking, the evil in the world is sometimes greatly simplified and captiously personalized. Let only Hitler or Ho Chi Minh be put down, and all will be well! But, precisely in the popular mind, this faith in the simple uprooting of evil is quickly displaced by a more profoundly-held conviction of the impenetrability and unmalleability of all foreign situations. And, in this more deep-seated conviction —"We do not know what makes these foreign people tick; we cannot seriously influence them" —American popular opinion is largely at one with the Congress and frequently at one with the State Department and the White House.

Confident of its power to destroy, dubious of its ability to construct, Washington has entered few —if any—recent foreign involvements in a conviction of omnipotence. In Vietnam, more than a decade of efforts to limit responsibilities preceded the 1965 decision for heavy commitment. Characteristically, during the Eisenhower administration, the U.S. government urged Saigon to carry out land reform but refused to finance the program, fearing too much responsibility in Vietnamese socio-political affairs—though Washington was quite aware that closer American involvement might yield a larger and better performance. Today, it is true, in Vietnam, such reticence is quite gone. On December 4, 1966, Ambassador Lodge stated that pacification would require ". . . city and village governments that can support the police function, and you won't get this until we've rebuilt the whole political, social, and economic structure in this country." It requires either mindless arrogance or settled desperation for "we" to determine to rebuild "*the whole* political, social, and economic structure" of any country—including one's own. (Deprived of every traditional cement, such a total rebuilder is likely to wind up with no material but human sand, and only too probably he will then be reduced to trying to glue the sand together by force.) The Vietnam case is one of desperation.

Washington is full of sad stories of the Vietnam "adviser" who—outraged by seeing an important job badly done—became a doer himself and won abiding ill-will for his pains. All such advisers have read the manual which says that one must work through the local leadership. But what if the native elite is no good—morally indifferent, intellectually inadequate, personally lazy? There will always be advisers who will then decide, against every tired wisdom, that it is not right to turn one's back and go away. These fanatic hearts will maneuver, with varying skill and fortune, to "intervene." They will be the despair of their clan—and much of its salt.

II

ONE OF OUR MOST valuable books on the China of the 1940's bears the strained title *America's Failure in China.** After China's disasters of 1959-61, many popular writers shifted the attribution: it became *Communism's* failure in China. Both views put triviality where there is tragedy. It is mankind which has failed in China. And no one today knows the way out.

I recall again C. P. Snow—not in pointless personal criticism but because he has so perfectly spoken the mind of the pretendedly-scientific optimism which fancies it knows the straight way to Asian development. "But for the task of totally industrializing a major country, as in China today," Snow wrote in the summer of 1959, "it only takes will to train enough scientists and engineers and technicians—will, and a few years time." In 1958, the Chinese leadership also held to the sufficiency of "will," advanced training, and "a few years time." Then it was their official doctrine that China's industry would equal Britain's in 1967. After 1959, however, when their "Great Leap Forward" had ended in a great fall, the same Maoist leadership found it necessary to tell its people quite other things. That, in China, enough food to sustain life was not yet assured. That agriculture must be put first, though a modern agriculture might still be fifty years away. That an advanced industry, the basis for full Communism, might be a century off. In human affairs, who says maybe fifty years, says he does not know when; who says perhaps a century, says perhaps never.

And the Chinese leadership now tells its people another fundamental thing—a thing not to the credit of any of the sons of man. *No country helps China.* True, in the 1950's, the USSR made loans to China, including loans for military supplies, totaling perhaps $1,325 million. (This amount is greatly less than the foreign aid which India received in the single year 1966.) Before the end of 1965, this debt had been entirely repaid. To pay, China shipped food to the USSR even in 1960-61 when, as we now know, some of her own people starved. And today, says the Chinese leadership, the USSR and the U.S. join in threatening China and in plotting to invade China. The Chinese people must rely only on themselves—their own asceticism, comradeship, discipline, strength, and skill. They must retreat before the invading enemy, lure him on, absorb him, and cut him to pieces.

China is again a closed society. Even before 1960, a gifted and alert engineer from Eastern Europe—a party member in his own country—could report that he had lived and worked in China for a year and not had a single significant human contact

* Tang Tsou, University of Chicago Press, 1963. This is our best narrative of the diplomatic-political side of the demise of Kuomintang China, but the Chinese hardly appear.

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with a Chinese person. The usual travelers' books tell us nearly nothing. Fortunately, two recent books of photographs are exceptions, and warmly to be recommended on that account.* Neither author, however, reports learning anything important in China from personal acquaintances.

One indeed writes:

> In every other country, human contacts help. . . . This is not possible in China. . . . For the foreigner . . . direct and spontaneous communication is practically non-existent. . . . The replies . . . are usually ready-made formulas, recitals of the official viewpoint. . . . Dialogue . . . , in which the personality of those talking comes across, is almost unknown.

What cannot be learned from persons certainly cannot be learned from statistics. In 1958, Chinese statistics became propaganda. Since 1959, almost no comprehensive statistics are published. Perhaps few are collected. One of our most discriminating authorities writes, with a candor which deserves wider emulation:†

> . . . because there is no reliable data, the basic dimensions of Chinese society have not been adequately measured and cannot be known. . . . China is probably the only country in modern times which has first embraced and then repudiated statistical accountability as the basis of national planning.

In this statistical blackout, one can only guess the total population of mainland China. My guess, for the beginning of 1967, is about 775 million, plus or minus 10 per cent. Apparently, more than two-fifths of this population is under age fifteen, and more than 80 per cent earns its livelihood principally in agriculture.

We shall probably not be greatly misled if we count that Chinese families containing over 600 million persons—fifty times as many as in the U.S. —work primarily at farming. Minimally, these Chinese families contain 250 million farm workers. On a national average, after including multiple cropping, each such farm worker harvests annually a crop area of under 1.7 acres (U.S.: about 50 acres). Since 1957, perhaps since 1955, the total national harvest is, at best, stagnant.** By accepted convention, "grain" in China includes not only rice, wheat, and other grains but even beans and potatoes. On this basis, total "grain" production was about 185 million metric tons in 1957, and it has apparently fluctuated between 175 and 180 million since the recovery from the exceptionally bad harvests of 1960 and 1961. The Chinese authorities purchased abroad (net) an annual average of some 4.9 million tons of grains in the years 1962-65 and perhaps 5.7 million tons in 1966. Yet Chinese grain supply for consumption in 1965-66 is estimated (by the U.S. Department of Agriculture) to have been about 16 per cent lower per capita than in 1957-58. The total present diet is estimated to supply about 85 per cent of the 2,300 calories per day calculated as the "minimum" requirement for China by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations. Without giving full faith and credence either to such minima or to such calculations, we may recognize that this diet probably involves some malnutrition, that it comes close to hunger, and that serious crop failures would push China over to catastrophe.

Mechanization is not the remedy; short-run, China has no employment for displaced labor that would pay for the machine. Irrigation and drainage are part of the remedy; but they involve much skill, capital, and time. Chemical fertilizers are also part of the remedy; but China lacks capital to produce fertilizers or foreign exchange to import adequate supplies. Better seed varieties might make the greatest single contribution; but such varieties have to be found, and they also characteristically require more fertilizer and water. Greater incentives to the farmer might help; but China is turning her back on that path. In sum, the requisites for improving Chinese agriculture—whether of capital, science, skills, or incentives—are lacking. And there is no evidence that, in the past decade, China has made progress in overcoming these deficiencies.

IN INDUSTRY, China entered the 1960's with a crisis and recession which can be compared only with the Western experience of the Great Depression of the 1930's. Having first reported a peak civilian non-agricultural employment of 56.9 million persons in 1958, the Chinese authorities also reported (in fragments) that in 1959-61, more than half were returned to agriculture. Only in December 1964 did Prime Minister Chou En-lai announce that the industrial production level of 1957 had been regained. One may hope that by now the peaks of 1958 have also been surpassed, and that in 1967 China's aggregate industrial output will be the highest ever. But meanwhile, the population has also increased by perhaps one-fifth.

In 1966, China's workers were urged to create "Taching-type" enterprises—modeled after the Taching oil field—and China proudly announced basic self-sufficiency in crude petroleum; this self-sufficiency, however, was apparently at the tiny

* Because of its superb photographs, I put first *China*, by Emil Schulthess, Viking, 1966. Perhaps even better, as photographic history, is Marc Riboud, *The Three Banners of China*, Macmillan, 1966. Quotation from page 12.

† John S. Aird, "The Population Count—'Reds' Versus Experts," in *Diplomat*, Sept. 1966, a first-quality essay. On related topics, see also *Nonagricultural Employment in Mainland China*, by J. E. Emerson, Washington, 1965.

** Recent U.S. Department of Agriculture views are well stated by Marion R. Larsen in *Foreign Agriculture*, Aug. 8, 1966, and *The Far East . . . Agricultural Situation*, March 1966. Some elements of the background are analyzed in *Food and Agriculture in Communist China*, by J. L. Buck and others, Praeger, 1966; the two essays by Owen L. Dawson have particular current relevance.

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consumption level of about 200,000 barrels per day (U.S.: 12,000,000). Indeed, China has now produced more rare things than petroleum—plutonium and even uranium 235. Yet in 1965, when China's exports regained the $2.2 billion level of 1959, they were still less than the exports of Denmark. Moreover, China's exports are those of an undeveloped economy—agricultural products, textiles, a few specialties (tin, tungsten), and simple consumers' goods.*

Such countries as France, West Germany, the United Kingdom, and Japan—with populations 7 per cent to 13 per cent of the Chinese—each have an industrial output between two and four times the output of China. Each has also accomplished an industrial expansion, in the past ten years, much larger than China's. Less developed countries—Taiwan, Greece, Israel, Mexico—have also been moving ahead much more rapidly than China. Indolent minds do sometimes still repeat the slogan that China will be a model of industrialization to other poor countries. But general emulation of China's industrial accomplishment would make no sense.

III

WHAT THE COMMUNIST regime has undeniably accomplished is to make China a functioning centralized state. Everything in this state is authoritatively organized—farm, factory, office, school, residence area. There is no private place. The governing hierarchy requires of everyone both conformity and active assent. Who errs will be patiently corrected. Who denies —or affirms another truth—will be reshaped or squashed.†

Very little about this government of China is known to those not members of its inner circle. Our best document** does not come from a high echelon; it is no substitute for a set of minutes of the Politburo. But it is impossible for an alert mind to study this document without noticing one controlling feature—the drastic divergence from Stalinism. For Stalinite authoritarianism, the sequence of public activity is first the leader's determination, then decree, order, propaganda, and obedience—or else prison, labor camp, or firing squad. For Maoist authoritarianism, the sequence is the same through propaganda, but then comes the new stage of *persuasion*—coercive persuasion it may be, but still persuasion. *One must deal patiently with the masses.* In the end there is no give and take, no right to dissent, to advance one's own considerations, to reason, and to finish by disagreeing. But the Maoist official must follow "the mass-line": he must not command but persuade. And all persons must be persuaded; they must either be persuaded or die. And those who live must demonstrate their persuasion daily, actively, militantly. Admittedly, when all is done, it is probably the Maoist authoritarianism which is the more destructive of spiritual freedom and intellectual spontaneity. Admittedly also, Stalin never exacted such servile adulation as Mao now receives. But the psyche of the society which Maoism creates is not to be identified with the psyche of Stalinism.

To its own officers, in 1960-61, the Chinese government acknowledged that the condition of the country was catastrophic. Many people were starving. Peasants had been in armed revolt. Simple soldiers asked for guns, to kill Communists. The militia was widely regarded as "rabid dogs, whippers, and bandits." Military officers had been guilty of extreme cruelty to starving civilians. Nevertheless, along with these miseries, officers were invited to share large horizons. The revolution was conquering in all the world; soon it would embrace the entire continent of Africa. And, to prepare for its role in these great events, the army was instructed to rely on the trained, devoted common man, soldier or guerrilla, fighting the enemy face-to-face or at a distance of a few meters, best at night. The army must separate itself from the error of Marshal Peng Teh-huai (Minister of Defense, dismissed in September 1959) and General Huang Ko-cheng (the army's simultaneously dismissed Chief of Staff) who had followed the "bourgeois" line of emphasizing military professionalism and advanced military equipment: ". . . if there is a war within three to five years, we will have to rely on hand weapons."

Late in 1965 or early in 1966, the government of China dismissed another army Chief of Staff. The newly fallen was that very General Lo Jui-ching who had been appointed in 1959 to "rectify" the army in accord with "the thought of Mao Tse-tung." Nevertheless, he and several of his senior associates—many veterans of the Long March—were again found, in 1965-66, to be "taking the bourgeois, capitalist line." (Perhaps they had advocated a better-equipped, more professional military force. Perhaps they were even indulgent of military collaboration with the USSR.) In May 1965, General Lo had publicly espoused a military doctrine of ". . . pursuit to destroy the enemy at his starting point, to destroy him in his nest." And Lo had reminded his auditors that, by such pursuit, Stalin had seized the ground for the establishment of Communist states in Eastern Europe. To General Lo, as well as to scores of others of

* Our best analysis of China's international economic relations, through 1963, is Alexander Eckstein's *Communist China's Economic Growth and Foreign Trade*, McGraw Hill, 1966.

† The reaction of a sensitive Chinese of the older generation to this totalitarian intensity is well conveyed in Mu Fu-sheng, *The Wilting of the Hundred Flowers*, Praeger, 1962, especially pages 116 *ff.*, 128 *ff.*, and chapters 4 and 6. See also "From Friendship to Comradeship," by Ezra Vogel, in *China Quarterly*, January-March 1965.

** This consists of 29 issues of the secret "Bulletin of Activities" of the Chinese army for 1960-61, issued as *The Politics of the Chinese Red Army*, ed. by J. C. Cheng, Stanford, 1966.

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the Yenan generation who were purged in 1965-66, their accusers addressed the following admonition:

> To devote oneself to revolution for a whole life, one must reform all one's life. Even the "old guard" officers who suffered long and hard can let non-proletarian ideas enter their heads.

THE great party schism emerged suddenly. In January 1965, the National People's Congress re-elected all the old comrades (with minor exceptions). Then outsiders could still wonder at the cohesion of this senior leadership, which had stood together through three decades, with only minor exclusions of high-ranking figures in 1937-38 and 1954-55 and 1958-59. By early 1966, however, the leadership was visibly split. The faction around Mao speaks loudest, and raises him to godhead—apparently because it could not stand were his authority once to become questionable. Marshal Lin Piao, the Minister of Defense, now holds the highest eminence after Chairman Mao, but this eminence is apparently not acceptable to many of the Marshal's recent equals. The opponents of the Mao-Lin leadership—some denounced, some dismissed, some arrested—obviously continue to resist. Failing Mao's support, however, it seems unlikely that these opponents can come to power during his life.

Of the highest governing body, the seven man Standing Committee of the Politburo, as it was in January 1965 (*Mao Tse-tung*, Liu Shao-chi, *Chou En-lai*, Chuh Teh, Chen Yun, *Lin Piao*, and Teng Hsiao-ping), only the three whose names are italicized remain in position at the beginning of 1967. Of the large Central Committee of the party, the majority has also, it seems, had to be dismissed or overridden. In China's government, there was no way to proceed against such opposition by judicial process. And it was impossible to proceed against *this* opposition through the party or the ordinary executive machinery of state: the opposition controlled the apparatus of both party and government. A special *Sturmabteilung* of youthful Red Guards was therefore created, under the sponsorship of the Ministry of Defense, to root out the counterrevolution.

These stormtroopers were sent out to administer revolutionary justice to the enemy—to "those within the party who are in authority and are taking the capitalist road," and to "reactionary bourgeois scholar despots," and to those who favor "putting economics first, putting technique first, putting one's work first, and putting specialists first," and to "a handful of anti-party, anti-socialist, and counterrevolutionary intellectuals." In time, they were given names to go with these formulas. And so they found that the highest enemies of socialism were the Head of State and the General Secretary of the Party, Liu Shao-chi and Teng Hsiao-ping. So also they found that comrade Peng Chen (yesterday a leading member of the Politburo and mayor of Peking) and comrade Lu Ting-yi (propaganda chief of the party since Yenan and yesterday Minister of Culture) were in fact "demons and monsters" who had long held up "a big red umbrella" to shield innumerable smaller scoundrels and counterrevolutionaries.

The new Mao-Lin leadership includes several personalist elements. Mao's wife (utilizing the name Chiang Ching), not previously active in politics, has emerged now to give authoritative speeches and to be a cultural adviser to the army. Also from Mao's entourage, now added to the standing committee of the Politburo, is Chen Po-ta, formerly Mao's personal political secretary. Two other new members of the Standing Committee, Tao Chu and Kang Sheng (respectively from the regional administration in the South and the secret police), were said to reflect Marshal Lin's friendships and influence. Yet Tao was being denounced as an associate of Liu Shao-chi's "black command" before the year was out. Li Hsueh-feng, who replaced Peng Chen in June, was also already being denounced by the Mao-Lin faction in December. Clearly, if we have here a conspiracy for an inside *coup d'état*, the Mao-Lin conspirators are short of talent and cannot count on their chosen subordinates.*

Through the mouth of Chiang Ching, the Mao-Lin leadership has indeed indicated (Nov. 28, 1966) that it is not a majority or was not until it "rectified" the count. The lady explained she would rather not count votes but weigh them. She reprobated talk

> . . . about minority or majority views independent of the class viewpoint. . . . It is necessary to see who has grasped the truth of Marxism-Leninism and of Mao Tse-tung's thought, who is ready to maintain the proletarian revolutionary stand, who is genuinely carrying out the correct line of Chairman Mao.

And six days later, the lady spoke out against the municipal authorities of Peking, whom she found —even after the disgrace of Peng Chen—"as rotten as ever." And she added:

> They are reactionary, two-faced. They insult Chairman Mao. They attack us. They must be wiped out, once and for all.

It was this Mao-Lin leadership which set its Red Guard stormtroopers—all over China—to holding kangaroo courts, beating up "wolves in sheep's clothing," sacking homes, arresting whomever they were told to arrest, smashing temples, burning books, and generally doing revolutionary justice.

Though we hear shouts of accusation and witness the self-abasement of the accused, no one in the West has cogent evidence of the substance of this struggle. We do not know the issues. We do not

* Perhaps the most valuable single guide for following current Chinese affairs is the little weekly bulletin, *China News Analysis*, published since 1953 in Hong Kong.

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know the strengths of the contenders. How much is a genuine difference of policy? How much is mere contest for power? If the Mao-Lin leadership does put forward a distinctive skein of thought for "mass-line" indoctrination, this skein is made of self-abnegation, esteem for manual labor, a model worker-soldier, cultural primitivism, Sinicism insofar as compatible with primitivism, emphasis on non-specialization, and rejection of all social distinctions based on training and skill. But we do not know whether a skein thus spun is unacceptable to the Liu-Teng opposition, and—if unacceptable—with what nuances of differentiation they would design its replacement. It is silly to classify one side (say Mao-Lin) as "hard-line" and the other (Liu-Teng) as "soft-line." If, in favoring income incentives for civilians and insignia of rank for army officers, Liu is closer to Stalin than is Mao, does this greater closeness make Liu a libertarian? Are we to forget that it was Peng Chen who, in 1951, led a public execution meeting in the Central Park of Peking, repeatedly calling upon the crowd to second him alternately in the sentences "Kill these men!" and the invocation "Hail Chairman Mao"? In August 1966, the Central Committee announced that ". . . the situation is one of a new all-round leap forward emerging"; does this reminiscence of the 1958-9 economic lunacy delight the "hard" Chou En-lai more than the "soft" Teng Hsiao-ping? In foreign policy generally, who is more "hard" than comrades Liu, Teng, and Peng? And which side emphasizes the importance of a capacity for frontier counterattack and offensive warfare?

"We want to liquidate entirely, by this great cultural revolution," said Chou En-lai in June 1966, at Bucharest, "all the old ideas, the entire old culture, all the old habits and customs . . . [We want] to build socialism and prevent the restoration of capitalism." Primitivism apart, such statements tell us almost nothing. Of course, the accusers will say they are more socialist and their opponents more capitalist. Of course, the accusers will also say their opponents wished ". . . to usurp the leadership of the party, the army, and the government." But what does it mean to "usurp" in a Maoist society where there is no rule of law, no procedurally legitimate way to win the highest offices of state, and where legitimacy resides in possessing "correct thought"?

IV

While the Red Guard proceeds with rectifying China's culture and administering revolutionary justice, the rest of the world can perhaps reasonably do little but look on, with compassion. There is, I suspect, for the immediate years, little ground for new, self-concerned fear. China is rending herself. She has not increased capacity for external aggression, and it may be that she has less mind for it. For the present, the Mao-Lin rhetoric of daring puts its accent rather on how resolutely the foe will be repelled when *he* attacks. And today the young Mao-Lin stormtroopers are not being taught that they are the deprived sons of a *Volk ohne Raum.*

In any case, China is not in 1967 a considerable military power, beyond her own frontiers.* Let us provisionally set aside nuclear weapons. Then, on the Eastern and Southern rim of Asia, China makes a distant second in military capacity: the U.S. is first. And, on its inner Asian frontier, China again is only second: the USSR is first. What a Chinese military force of lightly-armed, poorly-supplied infantry can do, General Lin Piao demonstrated in November-December 1950, when his armies outmaneuvered and outfought those of General MacArthur. What such an armed force can*not* do was demonstrated in February 1951, when General Lin's "third phase" offensive was stopped dead, and in May-June 1951 when the Chinese armies were monstrously bled by the superior firepower and mobility of General Van Fleet's forces. In the intervening years, China's relative military inferiority has become more pronounced—and further so since the 1959-60 break with the USSR.

During the next few years, China's nuclear weapons will, I think, be unequivocally "counterproductive" to China's own purposes. In war, these nuclear capabilities are still too meager to give her equality, but they may already be sufficient to do considerable damage to a reachable opponent. China's initiative of participation in a war, where the U.S. or USSR was associated with the other side, would therefore today probably be a signal for immediate destruction of her nuclear production facilities, her missile bases, her airfields, and her harbors (which might house submarine-carrying nuclear missiles). In such a destructive strike against China, I have no reason to assume that tactical nuclear weapons would be withheld. Quite naturally, therefore, even if we set aside the wisdom of Mr. Bertrand Russell, the possession by China of a few nuclear weapons must make her—both in the U.S. and the USSR—the standard staff college model for the exploration of the idea of a preventive "first strike." China has become a more urgent target.

When the Chinese archives of the past decade are one day opened, it will probably be demonstrable that there was an important shift in Peking's foreign policy already during 1958-59. This was a shift toward greater international militancy and away from collaboration with the USSR. However, it is not as early as 1958-59 but rather some years later, indeed after 1962, that there seems to have emerged the truly profound breach between the two great states which profess

* A reasoned evaluation is "Communist China's Capacity to Make War," by Brigadier-General S. B. Griffith, II, in *Foreign Affairs,* January 1965. One important strand is ably treated in *Sino-Soviet Military Relations,* edited by R. L. Garthoff, Praeger, 1966.

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Communisms. In 1958, certainly, the Maoist leadership still held that China, like the USSR, was making spectacular economic progress. But, in the subsequent years, the Chinese leaders—or some of them—seem to have come to understand that, with respect to China's economic advance, they had been quite deluded. *Going it alone, China could go ahead, at best, only very slowly.* Then these leaders—or some of them—seem to have broken not only with the USSR but perhaps also with the very foundations of Marxist utopianism: they apparently broke with the conviction that Communism—such Communism as is attainable in this life—must rest on elimination of material scarcity. They also broke with the Russian slogan that Communism should attempt to displace other socio-political systems through competition in yielding greater material welfare. In place of the Marxist ideology of a Communism of abundance and freedom, the Maoists then began to put a radically different Communism—a Communism ascetic, primitivist, and puritan, a Communism of prolonged equalitarian poverty and pervasive authoritarian discipline. In these latter years (and here, perhaps, Marshal Lin's ambitions are a factor), the dominant slogan became that all Chinese should model themselves on the soldiers of the People's Liberation Army—*in simplicity, in effort,* in discipline, in performing all kinds of work, and in saturation with "the thought of Mao Tse-tung." To this morality, the calling of man is "not to be afraid of hardship, not to be afraid of death." Certainly by 1965-66, it was to such an equal sharing in a devoted and hard life, unmoved by material incentives, that the Maoist voice from Peking called out its invitation—to all the wretched of the earth.

WE SHALL not grasp the essence of the world politics of these present years unless we make clear to ourselves how totally this Chinese call has now failed. It has failed with the USSR, failed with the lesser Communist states, failed miserably in "the third world." Among Communist states, only North Vietnam—always most influenced by the Chinese example—responds with some show of respect to Peking's doctrine. Even Albania reportedly now gives China obeisance without doctrinal concurrence. Elsewhere, even in those countries of Asia and Africa where Peking still has conventional diplomatic standing, the new voice of China is found absurd. The Mao-Lin leadership now speaks for a China which is isolated morally in greater degree than at any time since Communism took power.

So far as we know, China's general foreign policy objectives remain unchanged, not only since 1958-59 but even since 1949.* These objectives are to affirm China's place in the world, and to do so in the context of support for the world revolution. This affirmation and support are not envisaged as manifesting themselves in one surge toward victory, but from time to time—as opportunity and strength permit. China's natural allies are conceived to be the other faithful Communist states, the peoples of less-developed countries, and progressives in the advanced countries. China's natural enemy is correspondingly "world imperialism, led by the U.S.," or sometimes simply "U.S. imperialism." One may parley with the imperialist camp, and arrange truces, with the purpose of disorienting the enemy the better to divide and destroy him; but one recognizes "peaceful-co-existence" as a mere shamming tactic on the road to world victory. The essential bases for the achievement of this victory are the leadership of the party and the support of the people. The instrument is combat: "Political power comes out of the barrel of a gun." The tactic of combat is the subject of endless aphoristic wisdom: to be ingenious and daring; to train well and concentrate one's strength; above all, to fight only the engagements one wins!

The over-arching Maoist style is one of revolutionary optimism, courage, and militancy:

> Our cause is the revolutionary cause, and what we most need is revolutionary optimism. . . . We ride with the wind and march forward. Let us ride with the East wind which has overpowered the West wind, ride with the wind of Communism which has overthrown the Rightists. . . .

This Maoist spirit finds itself, however, increasingly frustrated by the emergence of false comrades, modern revisionists, who have lost confidence in revolution. Deprived of this confidence, they become broken men—like Khrushchev and his successors, "outwardly tough as bulls, but inwardly cowardly as mice." They are afraid to "make revolution," afraid to make war. They are afraid that even the most just, most indispensable wars of national liberation will escalate to wide nuclear destruction. Actually, they are no better than Social Democrats, professing (in Italy, in France) to believe in a peaceful parliamentary transition to socialism and (in the USSR) a peaceful worldwide victory of socialism through economic competition. Quite consequentially, these revisionists neglect the central duty of progressive man in this era—to engage in a militant, "tit-for-tat" struggle against U.S. imperialism, "the most ferocious enemy of all the peoples of the world."

THE Mao Tse-tung leadership never had solid reasons for gratitude to the USSR. Stalin did not support this leadership before 1935, when it made its way to power within Chinese Communism. Stalin did not believe it could defeat the Kuomintang; he correspondingly gave it almost no help from 1935 to 1945 and only minor, episodic aid

* On these themes, a learned, thoughtful essay, with which I do not entirely agree, is *China in the Postwar World,* by A. M. Halpern, in the *China Quarterly,* January-March 1965.

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from 1945 to 1949. The USSR—whether under Stalin, Malenkov, or Khrushchev—extended to Communist China only modest assistance from 1949 to 1957. Nevertheless, in late 1957, the two great Communist states appeared to be in fundamental accord. In November 1957, at the great Moscow gathering to celebrate the fortieth anniversary of the Bolshevik revolution, Mao is reported to have stated:

> Every organization must have a head, and the Communist party of the Soviet Union is best fitted to be head of the international Communist movement.

But this concord was transient. Some would say that by the end of 1959, surely by the end of 1960, it was quite dead. By then, the Chinese had been profoundly disappointed with Soviet unmilitancy in the Middle East (July 1958) and still more in the Taiwan straits (September-October 1958). They had been pained to find the USSR neutral between them and India (September 1959), seriously injured by Russia's termination of assistance to China's military development (June 1959), and greatly damaged by Soviet withdrawal from assistance to China's economic development (July 1960). They had borne insult as well as injury. Khrushchev came to them, to Peking, fresh from Camp David, and lectured them against "testing by force the stability of the capitalist system." He separated Russians from Chinese and announced, ". . . we Communists of the Soviet Union consider it our sacred duty, our primary task . . . to utilize all possibilities to liquidate the cold war." To the Chinese, this was revisionist betrayal and stupidity. Yet they allowed four years to elapse before proclaiming formal divorce; it took the nuclear test-ban treaty to bring that. Then the Chinese party stated, in an open letter (September 6, 1963):

> The leadership of the Communist party of the Soviet Union has allied itself with U.S. imperialism, the Indian reactionaries, and the renegade Tito clique against socialist China and against all Marxist-Leninist parties, in open betrayal of Marxism-Leninism and proletarian internationalism. . . .

Even before the removal of Khrushchev (October 14, 1964), Sino-Soviet polemics had acquired a rigid pattern. The Russians named the Chinese rash, romantic, and "adventurist." The Chinese called the Russians timid, opportunist, and "capitulationist." The Russians charged: the Chinese build Communism with romantic illusions; neglect the proletariat of the advanced countries; are adventurist on war and peace; rash in the face of nuclear destructiveness; pursue great power "special aims and interest . . . which cannot be supported by the military strength of the socialist camp"; engage in racist propaganda against whites. The Chinese countercharged: the USSR is restoring capitalism; diverts the proletarian masses in advanced countries from the true road of "smashing the old state machinery [chiefly the armed forces] and establishing a new state machinery [chiefly the armed forces]"; abandons the revolutionary national liberation struggles; propagates "nuclear fetishism," in denial of the importance of the soldier's spirit; spreads the slogan of a Yellow Peril. Mao personally (July 10, 1964) challenged the territorial extent of the USSR, though he also suggested, three days later, that China might wait long for rectification: the Chinese transition to Communism would still require "anywhere from one to several centuries."

CHARGE AND countercharge vied in astringency of insult—with the Chinese sustaining a consistent superiority. On July 28, 1964, Mao wrote Khrushchev* (in response to Khrushchev's effort to assemble a meeting of parties to condemn the Chinese):

> You are falling into a trap of your own making and will end by losing your skin. . . . We firmly believe that the day your so-called meeting takes place will be the day you step into your grave. . . . Once again we sincerely advise you to rein in on the brink of the precipice. . . . But if you refuse to listen and are determined to take the road to doom, well, suit yourselves! Then we will only be able to say: *"Flowers fall off, do what one may;/Swallows return, no strangers they."* With fraternal greetings.

Khrushchev's removal made only a transient and trivial change. According to the Chinese, already on November 14, 1964, the new Soviet leadership

> . . . told the members of the Chinese party and government delegation to their faces that there was not a shade of difference between themselves and Khrushchev on the question of the international Communist movement or of relations with China.

The leadership which succeeded Khrushchev has shown no more willingness to help China become a modern great power and no greater indulgence of Chinese ideas of how to help "make revolution." Though, after Khrushchev's fall as before, the Russians have suggested *some* enlargements of collaboration, both economic and political, the Chinese have uniformly rejected these advances as made in bad faith, accusing the Russians of trying "to sell horsemeat as beefsteak." Particularly after the Soviet-American cooperation in ending the Indian-Pakistani hostilities (September 1965), the Chinese rage observed no limits. Sometimes Chinese spokesmen described the USSR as worse than the U.S. because more tricky. The

* I so personalize the letter of July 28, 1964, from the CCP to the CPSU, despite the Red Guard assertion that Mao claims to have been treated like a dead father after 1958. The best guides through the conflict are Donald S. Zagoria, *The Sino-Soviet Conflict, 1956-61*, Princeton, 1962; William E. Griffith, *The Sino-Soviet Rift* [1962-63] and *Sino-Soviet Relations 1964-65*, M.I.T. Press, 1964 and 1967.

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Russians, for their part, accused the Chinese of trying to precipitate war between the USSR and the U.S., while the Chinese, in their own expression, would sit quietly on a mountain, to watch the battle of the tigers.

BUT IT WOULD be great error to believe that there is some uniqueness in China's separation in sympathies from the USSR. On the contrary, with few qualified exceptions, China is similarly separated from other Communists and non-Communists, from Asians and Africans and Latin Americans, as well as Europeans and Americans. Characteristically, in the Middle East, where the great powers, including the USSR, have recently used their influence to discourage grand confrontations, Mao has personally urged the Arabs to destroy Israel: imperialism, he said, has created two bases of oppression in Asia—Formosa in the East and Israel in the West. (Ahmed Shukeiry, leader of the Palestine Liberation Organization, boasted in Cairo on January 4, 1967, that it was in China that his officers were being trained and from China that his weapons were coming.) The lesser Communisms reject the idea of a world meeting to condemn the Chinese not because (with the partial exceptions of the parties of Albania, North Vietnam, and New Zealand) they share Chinese views, but because the shrewdest and most independent among them (Italians, Yugoslavs, Rumanians) do not wish to create the precedent of *any* excommunication. Even Albania has desisted from approving the Red Guard and the "Great Cultural Revoltion." North Korea has drawn closer to the USSR. The party in Japan has broken with the Chinese. The Indonesian party—after a senseless, horrible massacre—is no more. In Africa, the Chinese have retained diplomatic relations with only fourteen out of thirty-eight independent states; their rejection (except in Congo, Brazzaville, where their friends rule) has grown out of a fantastic record of "making revolution" by supporting plots and putsches. Even Castro has had a bitter public quarrel with them. Elsewhere in Latin America, the Chinese voice brings affirmative response only where a few desperate men assemble, having been turned away by all others.

Peking is increasingly talking to itself.

[The four sections printed above constitute the first portion of a longer essay on the subject, "China, Russia & the U.S." A second installment, centering on the "Russia" portion of the essay, will appear in an early issue—ED.]

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The Question of Survival

ROBERT ALTER

ALTHOUGH four generations of Zionist and Yiddishist thinkers, Hebrew essayists, novelists, and poets, have struggled with the definition of Jewish peoplehood and its bearing on a revived Jewish state, the question has never had much urgency in the intellectual life of American Jews. At times of stress or crisis, Jews everywhere tend to assume a common solidarity, but in this country, at other times, they have not troubled themselves much about the nature of their allegiances. It is not stress, however, but continued normalcy which evokes the malaise of problems of identity, and now that the Zionist goal of "normalization" has been palpably realized in Israel, a sovereign state for almost two decades, the whole question of Jewish national identity may begin to loom larger, in a new perspective, for many Jews. One possibly illuminating sign of these times is the excitement and disturbance aroused in France by a book on Israel which appeared there about a year and a half ago.

Georges Friedmann's *Fin du peuple juif?* ("The End of the Jewish People?"*) is one of those rare books that become "events" not for their appeal as scandal or literary novelty but because they truly are events in the realm of ideas, compelling us to reassess old assumptions, take longer views of the most familiar intellectual scenes. Friedmann's book created a considerable stir in the French Jewish community, and, to a lesser degree, in serious Christian circles in France. It was heatedly debated, attacked, praised in the press, and was even the subject of public forums and round-table discussions, including one in Strassburg in which Friedmann himself participated, trying to explain, as it were, to the indignant elders of Israel that what they objected to was not what he had meant at all.

Fin du peuple juif? is a book that encourages misinterpretation because it joins together so many ostensibly incompatible elements: a viewpoint that is scientifically factual and intensely personal, a set of cautiously reasoned conclusions that are designed to be boldly argumentative, and, in the heat of argumentation, a candid confession by the writer of his own ambivalence. The title itself may seem at first like a false lead in the interests of sensationalism, for the bulk of the book is taken up with a detailed survey of the State of Israel in the 60's; but in fact the title is precisely appropriate, as is the question mark with which it ends.

The best way, I think, to approach the book is the way Friedmann himself proposes—by beginning with the author. Georges Friedmann is a French sociologist of considerable repute and enterprise: he has published a dozen or more volumes of sociological inquiry, chiefly on questions of the meaning of work in the machine age; one of his studies is concerned with the emerging social and economic order in Soviet Russia, and two others with Latin America. He is, then, an experienced social scientist, accustomed to global perspectives. He is also, as he confesses in his engagingly personal preface, "one of those whom Jewish believers call 'marginal' or 'peripheral' Jews." Or rather, that is all he was until October, 1940, when the Vichy government banished him from his academic post because he was a Jew. Friedmann recounts with moving simplicity and directness how his whole world was shaken to its foundations by that event. The result, however, was not a "conversion"; on the contrary, the excluded professor soon rediscovered in working with the resistance movement the very sense of absolute solidarity with the French people which, until the advent of the Fascist regime, he had never had reason to question.

In 1963, Friedmann visited Israel for the first time. He went, he tells us, simply as a social scientist interested in studying new terrain, but once there, he was overtaken by a second, much greater crisis of conscience as a Jew, unexpectedly caught in "the grip of awareness of Judaism, the consideration of its role and of the mission it claims for itself in the world." *Fin du peuple juif?* is the result of that crisis of conscience: it is a doubly valuable book, because of the superb professional resources its author commands and because of the seriousness of his personal encounter with Israel.

Friedmann's conclusions—which, I shall argue, reflect the pronounced limitations of his own experience as a Jew—are debatable, but his general representation of Israel is not; it is as good a portrait of contemporary Israel in one volume as anyone has written. He devotes carefully documented chapters to each of the major areas of social con-

* To be published in English by Doubleday in June, with statistics updated through 1966.

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cern in Israel—the kibbutz, the new aspirations to affluence, the problems of integrating the Afro-Asian Jews and the Arab minority, the effects of the state of siege, the role of religion in society, the crisis of values in the younger generation. He even manages to make sense of the Histadrut, that inscrutable, omnipresent workers' federation which strikes some outsiders as a kind of second government in Israel.

Friedmann has a lucid comprehension of all the grave dilemmas and institutionalized perversities of Israeli society, but he also shows a sense of excitement in discovering the unique achievements of the Zionist enterprise. Both kinds of awareness are actively at work in his exemplary analysis of the kibbutz movement. He defines with great precision the many unsettling problems that now confront the kibbutz: the economic dependence on salaried labor, the radical changes in the nature of work (a redemptive activity in kibbutz ideology) brought about by industrialization and automation, the irresistible infiltration of bourgeois amenities and attitudes into the kibbutz, the widespread feeling in the new urban Israel that the kibbutz is now a peripheral institution, a quaint relic of the pioneering past. Nevertheless, he is genuinely moved by the accomplishments of the whole kibbutz "adventure," and he forcefully reminds us of an essential fact of historical uniqueness that we may sometimes forget through sheer familiarity: "The kibbutz movement, despite its limitations and difficulties, constitutes the most ample and successful revolutionary experiment in 'utopianism,' the one which most closely approximates the forms of life that Communism set itself as a goal."

IN GENERAL, Friedmann is able to offer a valuable assessment of what is happening in Israel because of the breadth of his own perspective. He continually raises basic questions about the place of Israel in what the French call, with more attention to the resonance of the phrase than to its logic, "the second 20th century." Can Israel put up any effective resistance to the incursions of the mass society, the dime-store-plastic, cinematic, transistorized process of universal Americanization? Can Israel offer any serious social or cultural alternatives in an age of accelerating automation and exploding populations? What role is Israel to have in the shifting interplay of tensions between East and West and the emerging Third World?

While Friedmann manages to show the larger significance of his subject by taking this broad view, he is also a nice observer of particulars. In two extended visits to Israel, he went everywhere, investigated all the milieux, talked with an extraordinary variety of people, examined all the available sociological studies in each area of his inquiry; and so his work scarcely suffers from the newness of the subject to the writer. There are, to be sure, occasional lapses. Sometimes one comes across a minor conceptual confusion, as in the characterization of Bible-instruction in Israeli schools as "more or less religiously oriented." At points, a gap in background knowledge shows through, as when Friedmann explains that the leader of a Hasidic group is known as a "Tsaddik, or Maggid." At rare moments, he reveals simply an inadequate experience of Israel. Visiting professors generally travel by cab, and this is surely why Friedmann attributes "coolheadedness and courtesy" to Israeli busdrivers, who in fact are proverbial in that country for their irascibility and aggressive bad manners. (This particular slip is an instructive instance of the danger of drawing inferences from social theory without sufficient observation: the bus companies in Israel are driver-owned cooperatives, and Friedmann assumes that the drivers' share in the enterprise gives them a sense of responsibility and dignity, while the ordinary Israeli will quickly tell you it gives them rather a sense of disdainful superiority to the passengers.)

More typically, however, Friedmann keeps the actualities of his subject sharply in focus. Writing with grace and wit, even with a certain sense of drama, he has a novelist's eye for revelatory detail and for the characterizing nuances of milieu. With all the statistics he adduces and the analysis of social structures which he undertakes, much of his understanding of Israel is communicated through vividly realized scenes—an immigrant celebration of Shavuot on Mount Zion, a moment of shared confidence with a young Algerian in a Jerusalem café, an encounter with a group of touring high-school students at the maritime museum in Eilath. His description of midtown Tel Aviv, in a few well-chosen words, defines a whole ambience with admirable precision: "the brilliant and noisy center of sumptuous shops and cafés, with their banal cosmopolitanism, where one sometimes has the impression of being in a Levantine city heightened with a touch of *dolce vita*, despite certain vestiges of local exoticism, bearded Jews in hats, picturesque *schnorrers*." Even in his honest enthusiasms, he maintains the distance of the cool observer who delights in the activity of critical observation. Thus, at the beginning of the book, he sweeps rapidly across the familiar panorama of Israel reborn: "a collectivity where men of all colors mingle, from five continents and 102 lands, drying the swamps, irrigating the desert, making new cities rise out of rock and sand, completely modern ports, housing complexes which in point of ugliness too often have nothing to envy of our own in France."

Nevertheless, as the troubled question of the title suggests, Friedmann's book is not merely a portrait of Israel; it is rather the large conclusions drawn from the portrait which make *Fin du peuple juif?* the event that it has been. In the last third of the book, he addresses himself to two broad, closely related questions—the nature of

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Jewish peoplehood and the prospects for Jewish continuity in Israel. Since he cannot envisage a Jewish religious faith which, as in the past, will serve as a unifying and sustaining force for the entire Jewish people, he sees two alternatives open to Jews: either to assimilate in the Diaspora, as they have been doing ever since the Emancipation, or to assimilate in Israel, where in a generation or two Jewish immigrants become Israelis, a people radically different in character traits, mentality, physical makeup, cultural values, from their ancestors. Now, this clean split between Israeli and Jew finally depends upon Friedmann's conception of Jewish peoplehood, and that will require some attention, but we may legitimately begin to test his conclusions by considering the Israeli scene itself, because the evidence there is not, I think, as onesided as *Fin du peuple juif?* would have us believe.

THE NOTION OF an opposition between being an Israeli and being a Jew, as Friedmann himself is aware, is not especially new. He refers a number of times to the Canaanite group in Israel, which he considers—rightly, it seems to me—as symptomatically important despite its numerical insignificance. The Canaanites, like most anti-establishment groups in history, were named by their adversaries. The appellation they themselves use, "Semitic Action," expresses their general desire to cast away the empty appurtenances of Jewish identity and to assume a new role as a Hebrew-speaking people among related Semitic peoples of the Near East; but this aim has led them to identify in some ways with the Semites who inhabited the land before Joshua's conquest—that is, before pristine Hebrew culture was encumbered by the relentless carping legalism and jealous monotheism of the Jews. Though the Canaanites are a stench and abomination in the nostrils of the Zionist leadership, as a matter of historical fact they are merely following out the full ideological implications of a strong undercurrent of anti-Jewish feeling, of revulsion from the experience and values of the Diaspora, which has run through Zionist thought from its beginnings. The memorable aphorism of Yudka, the hero of Haim Hazaz's much-discussed story, "The Sermon,"* jibes perfectly not only with the Canaanite position but also with a basic tendency, emphatic even when only implicit, in the writings of M. Y. Berdichevski, Y. H. Brenner, A. D. Gordon, and others who helped shape Zionist ideology—"When a man can no longer be a Jew, he becomes a Zionist."

Fin du peuple juif? marshals considerable evidence in support of this view. Several sociological surveys of Israeli youth have shown that its sense of belonging to any Jewish collectivity beyond the borders of Israel is often tenuous. Meetings between groups of young American Jews and young Israelis have revealed a serious lack of mutual comprehension—in the sociological terms Friedmann uses, there is perhaps an interdependence but no significant similarity between the two groups. A study of reactions to the Eichmann trial among young people in Israel indicates a simple incapacity on the part of the Sabras to imagine the agonizing predicament of European Jewry under the Nazis. When Friedmann adds to these findings the obvious fact that the Jews who have come to Israel are living in a new climate, in a drastically different combination of social, political, cultural, and even genetic elements, he feels he must conclude that "a new people is being created in our time, from day to day, in Israel: a young, physically new people which is neither the appendix nor the center of a henceforth legendary 'Jewish people.' "

Like most self-conscious attempts to be toughly realistic, this interpretation ends by neglecting certain significant aspects of the reality it sets out to define. Despite the trenchancy of the Canaanite critique of Zionism and its corroboration in the limited national horizons of many Sabras, the vast majority of Israelis assume without question that they are Jews, and would be shocked at being thought anything else. This assumption, admittedly, is perplexed with difficulties, for it is by no means clear what its practical implications should be, but it remains a primary datum of Israeli consciousness which can hardly be discounted.

In the past two or three years, moreover, there have been indications that at least some Israelis feel impelled toward more concrete expressions of their implicit sense of identity as Jews, or even toward a reconsideration of the classic Zionist assumptions against the background of Jewish life in the Diaspora. The growing concern for the plight of Soviet Jewry, closely parallel to concern in this country over Russian anti-Semitism, reflects an abiding sense of Jewish solidarity—only the most simplistic cynicism would write it off as merely a self-interested desire to see greater numbers, and "Occidental" numbers at that, arriving in the beleaguered state. Among Israeli intellectuals, a movement of groping toward the Diaspora has generally been initiated out of an awareness of the problematic nature of the relationship between Jews in Israel and elsewhere. The feeling persists, however, that such a relationship is a kind of existential necessity: several recent Israeli novels, for example, try to explore the complexities of coming to terms with Jews outside the State.†

In Israeli literary circles, the recent and conspicuous success of avowedly Jewish writers in America has been an object of fascinated contemplation and an occasion for self-examination as well. Israeli writers are, of course, inevitably

* Available in English in *Israeli Stories*, ed. Joel Blocker, Schocken, 1962.

† Two especially relevant novels, Haim Gury's *The Chocolate Deal* and Hanoch Bartov's *The Brigade*, which I discussed last year in these pages ("Confronting the Holocaust: Three Israeli Novels," March, 1966), will soon be published in English by Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

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struck by the immense quantitative difference between their own situation and that of the American Jewish writers: while Bellow and Malamud between them reach millions of readers, the best Hebrew fiction must be content with an audience of a few thousand. The qualitative aspects, however, of American Jewish creativity preoccupy Israelis much more: some Israeli intellectuals have been moved to wonder whether the lucid perspectives of alienation and marginality, supposedly the birthright of the Jewish intellectual in the Diaspora, have not been tragically lost to Jews living in a Jewish majority culture. Aharon Megged, an influential novelist and critic, writing in 1965 in *Masa*, the weekly literary supplement he edits, pointed out to his Hebrew readers that the prominence of Jews in American intellectual life is not comparable to similar phenomena in prewar Europe: American Jewish writers, he argued, are unique in the way they have stressed their Jewishness, virtually flaunted it, conscious that they have become modern culture heroes as the representatives of an anxious people in an age of anxiety. "It is themselves," the Israeli critic observes, "and not us whom they see as the heirs to the great tradition of the Hebrew literature of ancient times and of the Yiddish literature of recent generations. If they strike us as less than authentic Jews, in their eyes we are no more than Canaanites—not a manifestation of spiritual liberation, as Ahad Ha-am envisioned, but of spiritual contraction." Megged does not mean to propose a new "Jewish" program for Israeli intellectuals, but these are grave doubts he raises, even if in a somewhat bemused tone, and his words illustrate how some Israelis are beginning to rethink their relationship with Jewishness and the Diaspora. Appropriately, he ends his essay with a reflection on the bewildering diversity and elusiveness of what may be thought of as legitimate Jewish experience.

AN EQUALLY REVEALING document is a review by Ehud Ben-Ezer, a young critic and novelist, in a recent issue of *Shdeimot*, the kibbutz quarterly, of the Hebrew translation of Bashevis Singer's *The Slave*. Ben-Ezer concludes his enthusiastic appraisal of the Yiddish novel by arguing that Singer's fiction ought to be taught in Israeli schools, as part of a new curriculum of Jewish—instead of only Hebrew—literature. The review ends with an explicit renunciation of the jaundiced view of traditional Jewish life inherited by Zionism from the Hebrew Enlightenment:

> It seems to me that he [Singer], and not the writers of the Hebrew Enlightenment, belongs among the legitimate representatives of this [East-European] Jewry, which, after the Holocaust, maintains an "as-if" existence in all his work. Perhaps by such means the new generation of Sabras will manage to sense the actuality of Jewish existence in all its variety, without the complexes imposed by seeing it through the lenses of a generation that rebelled against it, rejected it, viewed it narrowly, laying bare every trace of decadence in order to create the myth of supposed "healthiness" which is no longer Jewish, in Israel.

The Israeli schools, I'm afraid, are still a long way from adopting proposals like Ben-Ezer's for a radically revised curriculum, but there have been some signs of a new popular interest in the vanished East-European Jewish milieu. The Hebrew version of *Fiddler on the Roof* has been an unprecedented success, not only because it is slickly American (other musicals, after all, have been translated), but also because it is Sholem Aleichem. The season it opened in Tel Aviv also featured successful runs of three other plays drawn from the world of the *shtetl*, a phenomenon that would have been unthinkable in the emphatically post-exilic Israel of a decade or more ago. Aharon Megged, at the beginning of the article from which I have already quoted, aptly observes the paradox:

> "My father's home," as we get further away from its point of disappearance, now seems more and more like a warm, solid, sturdy house, able to serve as an imaginative refuge for someone who lives in a wide open housing development, surrounded by building-scaffolds. No one would have imagined fifteen years ago that the *Palmachnik** would be looking, of all things, for a collective yesterday. That figure has long since gone the way of all flesh, or has matured, but his generation, and people younger and older, are looking for both yesterday and the day before.

These flutterings of Israeli interest in old-fashioned *Yiddishkeit* obviously do not constitute anything like a turning-point in the cultural development of the State. As Megged suggests, the vague yearning for a long-abandoned past is largely a matter of nostalgia—which is, of course, precisely the case for so many American Jews who have become interested in the *shtetl* in recent years. It seems unlikely that any viable sense of group identity can be maintained through nostalgia, because nostalgia is a mode of relation flawed with deception—about oneself, and about the nature of the past. What is interesting is that the former *Palmachnik* should be sharing a nostalgia, more or less, with the Great Neck Hadassah lady. It suggests that we are all in the same predicament: for being a Jew at this point in time is very much a predicament, though not a hopeless dead-end off the high road to assimilation, as Georges Friedmann implies. We are all fumbling, in the Diaspora and in Israel, for ways to make sense out of the confused but stubborn consciousness of our own Jewish identity in a new world: our bouts of collective nostalgia, whatever embarrassing excesses they may lead to, are themselves a testimony to the per-

* Israeli commando, a popular image of the tough new breed of Israeli Jew.

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sistence of that consciousness. The uncertain paths toward Jewish self-realization that have been followed in Israel and in America sometimes parallel each other, often diverge, occasionally intersect, but at least we have the potential advantage—so far conspicuously neglected—of learning from each other's mistakes.

It may seem as though in all this I am counterpoising Friedmann's weighty statistics with mere straws in the Israeli wind, but I think that is not the case. With the pace of history as rapid as it has become, predictions about the survival of any large human enterprise are risky, and surely one important "factor" to be pondered, if not measured, is the sustaining belief of those actually involved in the enterprise, even when the belief affects only a minority. The discussion of the kibbutz in *Fin du peuple juif?* illustrates this point nicely. All the external evidence might easily lead a sociologist to conclude that the kibbutz is an interesting, transitional social experiment which, in the changed conditions of "the second 20th century," must inevitably wither. Friedmann, however, with great imaginative sympathy for the kibbutz experiment, can feel the force of a faith in a more human social order which has energized the whole undertaking, and so he is unwilling to give it up for lost, despite the discouraging evidence of the facts. He has no such sympathy, on the other hand, for American Jewry: on the basis of the well-known studies of intermarriage and assimilation, taken together with our notoriously low birthrate, he concludes that we are, in the long view, on the way out. This is hardly a position to be casually dismissed, but it fails to take into account significant facts of consciousness which characterize the Jews whose demise is being forecast, or the presence of vital centers of activity—I have in mind not only individuals but institutions or even communities—which sometimes make one hopeful about American Jewish life, for all its self-admiring fakery and ostentatious emptiness.

Basically, however, what underlies Friedmann's vision of inevitable assimilation in Israel and in the Diaspora is his conception of Jewish identity, both individual and collective. In this respect, he seems to follow Sartre, whose definition in *Réflexions sur la question juive* he cites at one point with somewhat qualified approbation: "A Jew is a man who is considered by other men to be a Jew: that is the simple truth." This is obviously a definition by someone who comes from the outside, and uses nothing but the outside to define his subject, and that is almost equally true of Friedmann. He is uncompromising in his insistence, with italic emphasis, that "anti-Semitism *produced* Jewish consciousness, Jewish persistence, the perseverance of Jewish existence." To reach this conclusion, he must ignore certain historical facts and juggle others in a rather suspect way. Thus, he claims that the very genesis of Jewish peoplehood in the ancient world was "strictly dependent" upon external reactions to the various Diaspora communities because of their observance of Mosaic law. This is peculiar reasoning. In the ancient Near East, nationality and religion were coextensive; the Jews in their own land, obviously, were a normal people with a national faith. What is remarkable, as Yehezkel Kaufmann has shown in his monumental study, *Gola v'Neikhar* ("Exile and Foreign Land"), is that the monotheistic nature of that faith was able to sustain an unprecedented sense of national identity even in exile, enabling Jews to believe their banishment was a divine decree, not, as other ancient peoples in the same situation believed of their own defeat, proof of the inefficacy of the national god. Before concluding that the Jews kept their identity in exile because of Gentile reaction to their particularist practices, we surely must ask what inner necessity compelled them to maintain such practices when the established pattern of the ancient world should have prompted them to adopt the ways of their host nations.

THE WORD "determinism" crops up with unsettling frequency in the last sections of *Fin du peuple juif?* Though Friedmann recognizes, even admires, an intrinsic *élan* in Jewish culture, he continually explains it away as a "reaction" to external pressures. In this way, the elaborate regimen of Jewish law, associated by Friedmann with ghetto life, is supposed to have originated in the need for psychological security under extreme duress, in conditions of imminent threat to life, limb, and property. Although there is surely some truth in this view of the painstaking rigidity of Jewish observance, it does violence to history: the basic system of Jewish law was established not in ghettos but in the academies of the Hellenistic and Persian ages, when the conditions of Jewish life, and the relationship between Jews and Gentiles, were very different from what they would be more than a millennium later in Russia and Poland. In general, Friedmann tends to see Jewish life through the ages in a single frozen image based on a stereotype of persecuted East-European Jewry. In his view, the core personality (*personnalité de base*) of the Jew is entirely determined by anti-Semitism. These, according to Friedmann's "scientific" account, are the essential characteristics produced in the Jew by persecution: "an exaggeration of certain psychological traits, well-described in the literature of the ghetto, among which are a hypertrophied sense of criticism and destructive analysis, an escapism through dream, an active imagination . . ., cruelty in humor, self-denigration."

Now, one may find in "the literature of the ghetto" (Mendele? Peretz?) striking illustrations of some of these traits, though the ascription of cruelty in humor is rather puzzling, but this does not mean that such characteristics are part of the core of a universal Jewish personality. Because Friedmann relegates matters of belief and con-

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scious commitment to a secondary role in the persistence of Jewish identity, he must place great weight on "observable" similarities of character, and thus he assumes that Jews as people have been much more alike than they actually have been, not only at different times and places, but even at any one time and place. It is a historical fact that there has been a Jewish tradition, a Jewish people: I am not so sure whether there really has been a Jewish personality, and it is perhaps that which should be regarded as "henceforth legendary" in the light of the experience of modern Israel.

THERE ARE no completely reliable sociological measures of past societies, but one can easily cite a whole line of individual creative Jews whose lives and achievements show little relation to Friedmann's list of character traits, from Yochanan ben Zakkai and Akiba to Rashi and Maimonides, Judah Halevi and Samuel Hanagid, to an even wider group of figures after the Emancipation that includes not only Herzl and Ahad Ha-am, Rosenzweig and Buber, but also Einstein and even Freud. Friedmann's conception of Jewish character, beginning with the notion of a propensity to hypercritical, destructive analysis, is, to speak plainly, the stereotype of the Jew cherished by genteel anti-Semitism. There is, then, a hidden circularity in the argument of *Fin du peuple juif?*: having adopted the anti-Semitic notion of what Jews are like, it defines the Jewish people as a response to anti-Semitism and so concludes that with the disappearance of anti-Semitism the Jewish people as well must disappear.

Friedmann makes a few vague attempts to remind himself and his readers that Jewish experience in exile has also had more sympathetic aspects, but from his vantage-point as a highly acculturated French Jew, he is incapable of seeing the manifestations of genuine vitality in modern Jewish life in the Diaspora, or the continuities between that vitality and the realities of Israel. When he wants a general image of the Diaspora Jew, he falls, revealingly, into a classic Zionist contrast between the indomitable Maccabees, on the one hand—that is, Jews when they were *really* a people—and, on the other hand, the kind of Jew he encountered when he visited Poland in the 30's: "that somber crowd in caftans, bustling, fearful . . ., clinging to the walls when they went beyond the limits of the Jewish quarters." The Israeli journalist, Victor Cygielman, writing in a special issue on Israel of *Esprit*, the liberal French Catholic quarterly (September, 1966), offers a precise and eloquent corrective to this image:

> To be sure, there were in that period Jews in caftans, fearful, clinging to the walls. But to reduce to this stereotyped image the flourishing community of Polish Jewry before 1939, nearly three and a half million souls, with its Yiddish writers, newspapers, and theaters, its vast network of primary and secondary schools (where, among other things, modern Hebrew was taught), its trade unions and political organizations (socialist, Zionist, Communist)—that is almost like showing a tourist the district of the ultra-orthodox *Neturei Karta* in Jerusalem and concluding: this is Israel.

I have been treating *Fin du peuple juif?* as an argument while neglecting that question mark of the title which hovers over the whole book. Working from his limited premises, Friedmann does conclude that the "end of the people" is rapidly approaching, but he is pained by his conclusion, moved by a recognition of great loss in the Jew's final emancipation from exile. In part, however, he regrets the wrong loss, since his notion of Jewish existence as a response to hostile environments leads him to think of its contribution to civilization almost solely as an acuteness of consciousness generated by living in anxiety. He ends his book, very aptly, with a dialogue between two imaginary representatives of his own ambivalence: the first voice bemoans the disappearance in Israel of that spiritually fertile anxiety which has been the heritage of the Jews; the answering voice wonders whether any heritage is worth the price of tragedy exacted from the Jews, or whether historical Judaism might embody possibilities of living a happy yet creatively Jewish life. We may not all accept Friedmann's bias, but surely most of us share something of his ambivalence; it is a pity only that he was not able to give resonance to both sides of this dialogue in his entire treatment of Jewish peoplehood, past and present.

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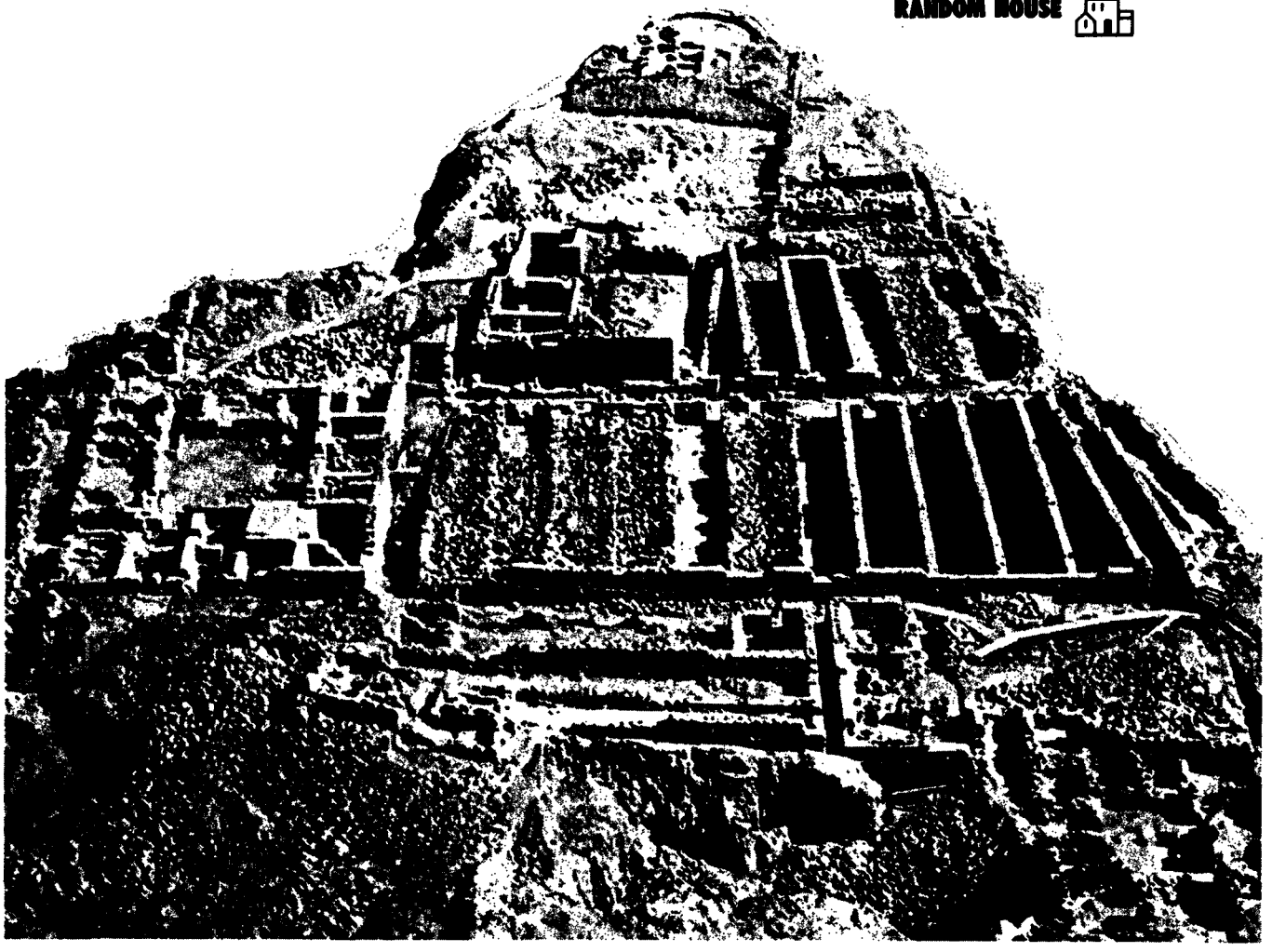

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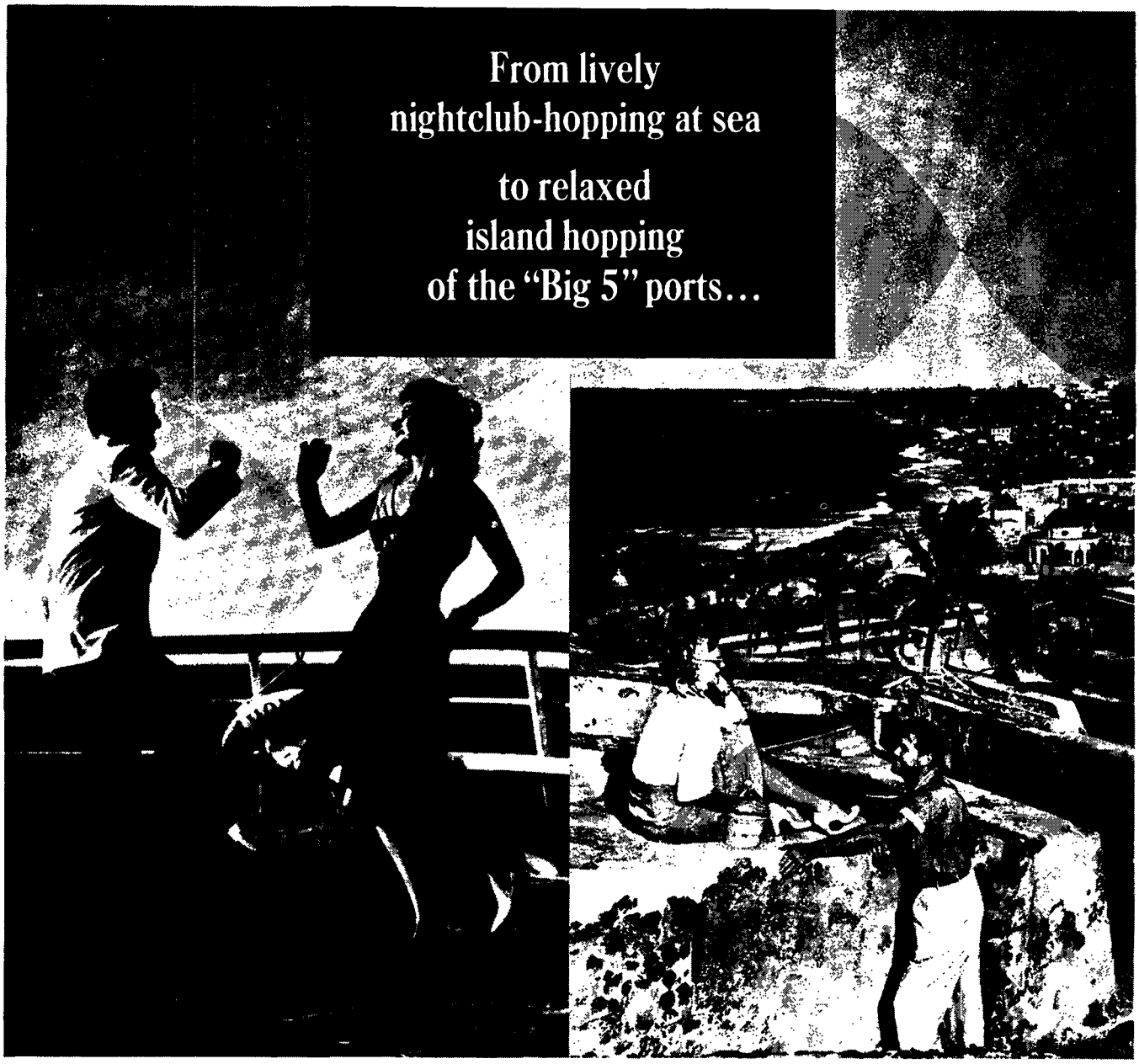

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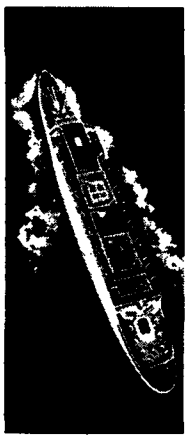

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A REPLY TO HERBERT MARCUSE

Norman O. Brown

MY FRIEND MARCUSE* and I: Romulus and Remus quarreling; which of them is the *real* "revolutionary."

He will not see the recurrence in revolution. Revolution is not a slate wiped clean, but a revolving cycle (*Love's Body*, p. 204). Even newness is renewal. As it was in the beginning. The idea of progress is in question; the reality of Marx cannot hide the reality of Nietzsche. The thing is to change the world; but it is also true that everything remains always the same. The assignment then is (to put it simply) the simultaneous affirmation and rejection of what is; not in a system, as in Hegel, but in an instant, as in poetry.

There is eternal recurrence; there are "eternal objects" (Whitehead); archetypes. This is a hard lesson. There is a sense in which war cannot be abolished (*Love's Body*, p. 182). Or, there is an eternal object of which literal war is a false image, or inadequate idea. The thing to be abolished is literalism; the worship of false images; idolatry. Allen Ginsberg saw it just the way it is: Moloch. A false idol fed with real victims. This is no joke. (Nor is fire; Heraclitean fire.)

Idolatry is fetishism, mystification; demystification would be an end to idolatry. But an end to idolatry is not so easy (*Love's Body*, p. 114). It is not the abolition of the temple, but the discovery of the true temple: Love's body. Karl Barth saw religion as idolatry; Karl Marx saw religion as the heart of a heartless world. The Sacred Heart. The thing is not to excise the heart but to put it where it belongs. The real atheism is to become divine. In a dialectical view, atheism becomes theurgy, god-making; demystification becomes the discovery of a new mystery; and everything remains the same.

There is another sense in which mystification must be affirmed. We have to surpass the Enlightenment notion that in the life of the species or of the individual there is a definitive change-over from darkness to light. Light is always light in darkness; that is what the unconscious is all about (*Love's Body*, p. 216). Nor can the light become a current, always turned on, in ordinary prosaic language. Truth is always in poetic form; not literal but symbolic; hiding, or veiled; light in darkness. Yes, mysterious. Literalism is idolatry of words; the alternative to idolatry is mystery. And literalism reifies, makes out of everything *things*, these tables and chairs, commodities. The alternative to reification is mystification (*Love's Body*, p. 234). The world is actually not a collection of commodities;

> *When silence*
> *Blooms in the house, all the paraphernalia of our existence*
> *Shed the twitterings of value and*
> *reappear as heraldic devices.*
>
> —Robert Duncan

Heraldic devices: airplanes as penis symbols rather than "modern conveniences." One of the eternal verities is the human body as the measure of all things, including technology. The businessman does not have the last word; the real meaning of technology is its hidden relation to the human body; a symbolical or mystical relation.

WITH THE whole world still in the bourgeois stage of competitive development and war, the thing to remember about Marx is that he was able to look beyond this world to another possible world, of union, communion, communism. What needs to be reiterated is not reassurance to the bourgeois that he will be able to carry his little old Self, Person, and Property into that world, but that the kingdom of heaven on earth is possible; and that other world, the negation of this jungle, cannot possibly be anything except Communitas. A higher form of chaos; instead of confusion, fusion (*Love's Body*, pp. 248, 253).

And, after Freud, we have to add that there is also a sexual revolution; which is not to be found in the bourgeois cycle of repression and promiscuity, but in a transformation of the human body, an abolition of genital organization. Indeed, *Love's Body* shows that genital organization is the same thing as Self, Person, Property; and, therefore, the abolition of genital organization, foretold by Marcuse in *Eros and Civilization*, turns out to mean what Marcuse calls the impossible unity and union of everything.

Yes, indeed, there was a God that failed; that mortal God, the great Leviathan; or Moloch; discovered to be not only mortal but also dead, an idol. From literalism to symbolism; the lesson of my life. The next generation needs to be told that the real fight is not the political fight, but to put an end to politics. From politics to metapolitics.

From politics to poetry. Legislation is not politics, nor philosophy, but poetry. Poetry, art, is not an epiphenomenal reflection of some other (political, economic) realm which is the "real thing"; nor a still contemplation of something else which is the "real action"; nor a sublimation of something else which is the "real," carnal "act." Poetry, art, imagination, the creator spirit is life itself; the real revolutionary power to change the world; and to change the human body. To change the human body: here is the crisis, *hic Rhodus, hic salta;* which, as Hegel said, is to be translated "here is the Rose, here begin to dance." To begin to dance; who can tell the dancer from the dance; it is the impossible unity and union of everything.

From politics to life. And therefore revolution as creation; resurrection; renaissance instead of progress. To perceive in all human culture the hidden reality of the human body. This is to discover as

* Mr. Brown is here replying to Herbert Marcuse's essay, "Love Mystified: A Critique of Norman O. Brown," which appeared in our February issue—ED.

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Freud did, the Holy Communion as the basis of community; the Eucharist; the cannibalism, the hidden *eating*; one of the forms of which is war—making children pass through the fire unto Moloch. Go to the end of the road and that is what you will find. And so the God is not Freud's God Logos, abstract or disembodied Reason, but the Human Form Divine. And the language is the language not of reason but of love. Reason is power; powerful arguments; power-politics; *Realpolitik;* reality-principle. Love comes emptyhanded (*Love's Body*, p. 237); the eternal proletariat; like Cordelia, bringing Nothing.

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* * *

CAVEAT EMPTOR JUDAEUS

Cecil Roth

THE ANTIQUE MARKET is booming: and as one who purchased his collection long since, and in any case is in no position to purchase anything more now, I cannot but rejoice at the fact. The market in Jewish antiques on the other hand is not merely booming. It came into existence only a very short while ago, but it has already become affected by a runaway inflation. It is little more than a half century since a few eccentrics in France, Germany, England, one even in the United States, began to be interested in the artistic relics of the Jewish past—objects of Bigotry and Virtue, as a friend of mine once paraphrased the French *bijouterie et vertu*: Chanukah lamps for use in the home, pewter or majolica dishes for the Passover, the hanging lamps formerly kindled for the Sabbath, the brocades which hung before the Ark in the synagogue, the silver adornments which decorated the Torah scrolls, the illuminated *megilloth* or Books of Esther, the beautiful marriage contracts formerly common in Italy and elsewhere. But everybody knew that these collectors were eccentrics, and pitied them somewhat for not investing their capital in objects of more general interest or more profitable prospects. However, in a way such eccentricity was condonable, for the competition was so slight that the prices were negligible.

Now, however, the scene has changed. The universal collecting fever has spread to the field of Judaica. The economic well-being of Jews in some Western countries has made it possible for the circle of collectors to be immensely widened; and to some extent, doubtless, the abandonment of Jewish rituals has created a sort of guilt complex which results in an attempt to assemble the vehicles wherein these rituals were expressed in the past. As a result, apart from the newly-developed major Jewish Museums in New York, Cincinnati, London, and so on, there are smaller museums of Jewish ritual objects attached to synagogues and temples all over the United States, as well as overseas: and travelers to Europe or the East are anxious to bring back some object of interest to add to these collections and thus perpetuate their own names. Moreover, a very, very large number of private persons, including many enthusiastic young married couples, are now engaged in beginning to build up private collections of the same type, based in the first instance on the objects they may be able to use in their domestic rituals, but later extending more and more.

As a result of the growing demand, there is a growing supply, but unfortunately it is of frequently dubious origin. (Some sales by auction, for example, at renowned auction galleries, which purport to be of important collections and gain status thereby, turn out on investigation to be based on the recently and deliberately acquired stock-in-trade of professional dealers.) Since the supply of authentic antiques is limited (especially after the wholesale destruction of 1933-45, and the concentration of worthwhile specimens in the major museums), a lively manufacturing trade in Jewish antiques has sprung up in recent years, with its centers in Spain and (I regret to say) in Israel, both particularly suggestive centers for distribution: for what comes from Israel is even now imbued with some odor of sanctity, and what was purchased in Spain is ostensibly of very great antiquity—a relic of the ancient communities expelled from that country in 1492.

So far as this latter area is concerned, one may be quite categorical. To my knowledge, there is only one single authentic piece (or rather pair of pieces) of synagogue silver now extant which goes back before the 16th century: a pair of *rimonim* (Torah bells) preserved in the Cathedral of Palma (Majorca), though in fact not Spanish but Sicilian in origin. Other pieces may be extant, but I do not know of them, and would want to have their date authenticated by expert opinion were I to spend any substantial sum on them. And objects of the sort dating from before the year 1600 are also very, very uncommon (and should be correspondingly costly). To the collector, I can give only one piece of advice: *Never buy a Jewish antique in Spain!* (That is, *qua* Spanish antique: for indeed, a few authentic fairly old German-Jewish pieces have found their way into the Peninsula also.) Some little time ago, a pair of *rimonim*, described as being 15th-century Spanish, turned up for sale in New York: to the best of my judgment, they are 19th-century Moroccan, and poor quality at that: and I do not think that if they were presented to me I would put them on display.

The most ostensibly appealing and remarkable of the Jewish *objets d'art* now being put into the market has a romantic story attached to it. It is said to emanate from the Marranos (or crypto-Jews) of Spain and Portugal, who manufactured it in this way in order to conceal their observance of the rites of their former faith from the prying eyes of the Inquisition. (Sometimes, as a further embellishment, the purchaser is informed that it was formerly owned by a Grand Rabbi of Istanbul: the relevance is not obvious.) This precious object consists of a silver chalice (sometimes authentically old, and even of some value), which purports to be a *kiddush* cup. Into this are fitted ingeniously (1) a pair of candlesticks for the Sabbath (2) a Chanukah lamp (3) a Scroll of Esther (4) a *mezuzah* or some similar object, or whatever else appeals to the curious mind of the craftsman. Oc-

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casionally, this absurdity is even sold without extra charge (the price used to be around $1,500!) with a written guarantee of authenticity! But it is obviously an absurdity, apart from the fact that most of the contents are patently of recent manufacture. For none of these things was absolutely necessary for Jewish life (any lamp, for example, could serve for the Sabbath: and Sabbath *candlesticks* are a recent innovation); and to be found with an agglomeration of this type in his possession would inevitably have condemned the owner to the stake. Nevertheless, the manufacture goes on blithely, and I am afraid collections all over the U.S. count such horrors among their most treasured possessions.

Another trick of the industry is to adapt authentic objects by giving them a spurious inscription or embellishment: for it is easy enough to add a few Hebrew characters to an old piece of silver so as to qualify it for a Jewish collection. Thus, for example, a couple of words or a biblical verse in Hebrew can convert an 18th-century tea-caddy into a box for holding the *ethrog* on the Feast of Tabernacles, or a silver beaker into a wine-cup for the *kiddush* on Friday night. Fairly old Scrolls of Esther are easily obtainable at moderate price; these are then handed over to an illuminator who embellishes them with a conventional design, and it is difficult to deny positively that the object is in fact 17th- or 18th-century, as the vendor claims. However, the number of craftsmen in the field is limited, and it is not difficult to recognize their handiwork: it is generally in pastel colors, with a touch of gold, embodying a Gothic architectural design and the signs of the zodiac. Even if I saw this trademark attached to a silver or silver-gilt roller which appears to me to be authentic and desirable, I would hesitate to touch it: the entire object now appears to me suspect. Another very ingenious (and very common) method is to attach a newly-made silver hand with outstretched forefinger to the tapering end of a Victorian (in one case that I know, even Fabergé) buttonhook or umbrella-handle. This converts it into a very presentable antique *yad*, or pointer, used to follow the place in the Torah-scroll during the reading—and converts a price of a few dollars into a few hundred.

THE NEWLY-MADE silver objects are fairly easily recognizable: they are generally of rather base metal, with a somewhat heavy *repoussé* pattern, and decorated with bosses of semi-precious or colored stones. There is also a tendency for ivory or imitation bone-ivory to be used in the manufacture of some sections—a feature which immediately puts the collector on his guard. They are sometimes quite well-made and not bad value, and could well be used for ordinary synagogal purposes—but have no place in a Jewish museum. Similarly, the Chanukah lamps (and also hanging Sabbath lamps) of copper or brass are generally of quite good design—as they should be, since they are cast reproductions made last month of authentic old pieces, and worth no more than the price of cast reproductions. However, when the reproduction is in silver the whole of the basis of the work and object is falsified (though the price is correspondingly enhanced). Cast reproductions of the characteristic North African Chanukah lamps have now become very common indeed. They are attractive and worth having—providing that they are not regarded as antiques. Stone is, of course, ageless, and Chanukah lamps of stone were made in Yemen etc. for centuries past, though I would be inclined to ascribe some of those, which are now offered for sale as belonging to the early centuries of the Christian era, to a date around 1870—or later. Another category now being widely imitated in the Orient consists of *kemiot* or amulets, usually of base silver with long Hebrew inscriptions unintelligible in any case to the ordinary person. They are still being made, of course, but it is a wholly different thing somehow whether they are made for use or for sale.

When I first began to collect Oriental marriage contracts, the price was trivial (so, alas, I did not purchase as many as I should have). Now the value has gone up so enormously that a lively industry in falsification has sprung up. Only, the Oriental craftsman being so economical of his time, and his opinion of foreign intelligence being so low, the text of the imitations that he now turns out is absurdly curtailed in length, so that it loses all significance and as a document would be legally invalid. The Italian *ketuboth*, on the other hand, are far more beautiful and therefore more valuable, and recently I have seen one obviously copied from a photograph of a well-known original (with spurious signatures in, unfortunately, the wrong script).

Incidentally, there is one Jewish symbol from which the falsifiers are seldom able to abstain, but which should put the purchaser on his guard. The *Magen David* or Star of David became recognized as a specific token of Judaism only relatively late, and if I see it on some *objet d'art* I suspect that it cannot be earlier than the middle of the last century—and may be a good deal later.

It must be admitted that some of the contemporary fabricators show considerable ingenuity, or even learning. There is one highly complex and elaborately-inscribed article sold at present in Spain of which I can say no more than that it is of very recent manufacture and can have served no conceivable object: except for this, it is quite desirable. In Morocco, there are now being turned out miniature imitations of medieval astrolabes (that is, instruments for use in astronomical observation) with Hebrew inscriptions, which if genuine would be worth tens of thousands—but my search for the original has been unavailing. Some of the elaborate gold and enamel betrothal rings now on the market (it is uncertain whether the originals, now very scarce and correspondingly valuable, were South German or North Italian) are so well executed that only an expert can advise definitely on their age. On the other hand, those ungainly and elaborate specimens in silver which have become so common are almost all fabrications, however romantic the elements they embody, or the stories attached to them.

The auction price of Jewish *objets d'art* is soaring. There is no reason to complain about this. An antique is worth what it will fetch, or what it has fetched. Even if the enthusiastic purchaser pays what appears an

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astronomical price, in competition with another enthusiastic amateur, he has not made an error *qua* collector—that is a problem to be settled between himself and his bank-manager. But if the collector pays even a moderate price for what is sold to him as an antique, but is in fact a contemporary fabrication, he has been guilty of an irremediable blunder (besides the fact that he has been made a fool of). And, if such objects are deposited in a museum or some public collection, they debase the general taste and remain to trap future generations.

An imitation has indeed a place in a collection, when the original cannot be obtained: but a fake never, except in the rogues' gallery, for which there is place only in major collections. Though indeed, in view of recent developments, it might be desirable for synagogue and temple museums to have a display of such objects, in order to demonstrate to their supporters what not to buy when they are on their summer tour to ancient centers of Jewish life in Europe or the Holy Land—where action should have been taken by the competent authorities long before this. *Caveat Emptor Judaeus.*

CECIL ROTH, *the noted Anglo-Jewish historian, is a frequent contributor.*

* * *

SATIRES

Jack Richardson

AN INTERESTING phenomenon of the past few years has been the gradual adaptation of the Roman Church to practical moral attitudes which are sympathetic and recognizable to those outside Catholic dogma. Yet even more curious is the applause that each example of this new *extra ecclesia* concern receives. Let a lay moralist come out in public against war, persecution, or social inequity, and he is counted as just another heir of the Voltairean tradition. However, if the author of such sentiments is wearing chasuble and mitre, there is today astonishment and gratitude on the part of many otherwise intelligent men. It is as though some extraordinary sacrifice is assumed each time a church representative articulates a belief that has been among the ordinary baggage of civilized minds for centuries, and as though this sacrifice—perhaps of spiritual dignity—excuses a certain tardiness and anemia in the clergy's commitment to the city of man.

I have not embarked on a diatribe against the papacy. It is not the fault of the Church that surrogates for divine justice must tolerate excessive praise for an everyday deprecation of genocide. My point is simply that we are all happy to find agreement in unexpected places, and our reaction to such fortune may include a less than exact measure of the intellectual quality of our new allies.

This was my conclusion after seeing *Viet Rock* and *America Hurrah,* two plays that roused warm emotion among contemporaries whom I know not to be sub-literate. Having left somewhat dejected at the barrenness of both these works, I can only assume that, like the Holy See, so little is expected of the American theater that it can astound with even less.

LET US TAKE *Viet Rock,* a satire with some dance and music, on the war in Vietnam. Actually, there is very little to say about it. Once the author's position is known, and from the play's title that position should be self-evident, everything that happens in the play can be quite readily imagined by the conjuring up of those television chronicles of death and debate we see every day. If anything, instead of accentuation, which is generally the means of satire, Miss Megan Terry has managed in her way to shrink martial reality so that it seems not nearly so vicious nor so grimly amusing as a *Times* dispatch, say, or a CBS *Special Report.*

For instance, in *Viet Rock*'s main narrative, which follows the fate of a squad of soldiers from thumbsucking infants on through the draft, out into battle, and finally to obliteration in a Saigon bar,

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we are treated to a group of not unsympathetic louts very similar to the fun-loving gangs that John Wayne has led ashore so many times. Of course, now we are supposed to see them as men unable to shed infantilism and who, after the manner of their sergeant/mother, burp forth the standard extenuations of their circumstance —defense of freedom, the stand against aggression, not-wanting-to-be-there-but-if-we-must-then-by-God, etc. Now Miss Terry is entitled to her opinion that our military is made up of infants in arms, and, in a simple way, she may be right. But there is so much more.

Consider a young man who can wipe out a village and then set to building playgrounds for its orphans, and you may have a baby, but one must change the tone of laughter at its pranks. Like Brecht in *Mann ist Mann, Viet Rock*'s author is flaying the simpleton for allowing himself to be remodeled by the state into a slogan-spouting machine, but Brecht after all was dealing with the absolutes of totalitarianism, whereas now we are witnessing democracy's subtler persuasion to arms; and to depict this is a much more difficult challenge than Miss Terry can meet by scattering patriotic songs at ironic moments or by trotting forth government figures to speak a gibberish a good deal less amusing again than the best official gabble the public must decipher after each high-level speech and interview. Now I am not plumping for the model rather than the work it inspired, dragging out the old canard about how contemporary reality is too absurd to be improved upon by art. Groups like *Beyond the Fringe* and the *Second City* showed it could be done, at least in the area over which satire extends. What concerns me is the premise in *Viet Rock,* and in the attitudes that hailed it, that the categories of this cut of history are so clearly defined and morally ranked that art, like the comedians at their convention, need only call out numbers to get the proper response. If this succeeds, you have an audience as self-satisfied when it leaves the theater as it was when it entered, an effect antithetical to the ends of satire. It is hard to think of Swift writing so that those who read him could feel self-congratulatory.

The production, for all its song, dance, and fury, never did more than simulate theatrics, and often would not let the text lie peacefully, but pumped it up with sentiment and significance. I shall be a long time forgetting how, after an evening's explication of the obvious, the cast took leave from the stage, slowly, pausing to gaze and touch members of the audience, as though we had all been through something of deep moment together which had awakened us to being human. "Where art fails, it insults," was the dictum that came to mind to explain the rage I felt at the author's taking of this unearned aesthetic liberty.

But that was precisely the problem of *Viet Rock.* It earned its right to no conclusions and certainly to no indictments. Even the best of its humor did not come from the substance of the play. It was the old, tired foxhole banter about sex and country that made the best comic points, and this brings us back once more into the John Wayne tradition, where I'm certain the author of *Viet Rock* does not wish to be.

AMERICA HURRAH produced similar objections in me. I remember standing in the lobby during intermission and reading the reviews partisan to it that had been blown up and placed on large placards. One was comparing Mr. van Itallie's style to Bach fugues while another, after having granted that the author had created a metaphor for his time, was considering his plays as a possible harbinger of a renaissance in American drama. I was bewildered. I had just seen two of the three one-act plays that were to make up the evening and had felt that I was once again back in some drama workshop, pretending to teach playwriting; for it was in such environments that I first learned of the universal yearning on the part of dramatists to create timely metaphors. Sample stage directions from my students' works were: "A bare stage with light upon a ladder that has no beginning and no end.

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ATLANTIC-LITTLE, BROWN

X stands in the middle of the ladder, munching an apple, hesitantly looking above and below him." Or: "Bare room. No furniture. Single light. X sits mutely on floor, while Y, a woman, is shaving his head with a straight razor." Such situations, the authors informed me, and all the X's and Y's caught in them, were metaphors for our post-atomic age, and when I asked what made them consider a metaphor preferable to human beings onstage, I would be reminded of Beckett and his dustbins and that drama must expand beyond the personal. I would try to persuade them that once the curtain goes up, and there is a revelation of what the evening's metaphor is to be, the audience may grow restive unless the ensuing play adds some intelligent, humorous, or tragic flesh to that metaphor. However, they generally were less successful at this second phase and their work seldom did more than italicize the initial stage direction.

Mr. van Itallie had so far shown himself to be more adept than my students were. Where they had limited themselves for the most part to one quintessential metaphor, a play, he was adept at thinking up half-a-dozen or so. Thus, for instance, in *Interview,* the first of his trio, we are shown that our age is a personnel interview where smiles mask indifference, that it's also a simple housepainter asking his priest for guidance and receiving no answer or, again, that it is an anxious mind hearing from his psychoanalyst unintelligible jargon in which the only recognizable words are "mother," "penis," and "money." No matter if these notions have been the ready stock of all third-rate sensibilities for the past three decades or that van Itallie's thrusts at psychoanalysis and religion are just a little short of deep penetration—metaphors have been created, a general statement has been made, and, to be sure, made artistically by the use of crossed and interior monologues and expressionistic pantomime.

In *TV,* the going metaphor is, not surprisingly, television. Three employees of a rating company arrive to begin a day of channel watching, and proceed to reveal dull lives and squalid intrigues. Behind them, various stock television scenes are acted out and spoofed in a way major networks would never allow because it has been done much better over and over again by the comedians television itself hires. At the playlet's end, the world of the screen and the world of the watchers become finally merged in banality and thus . . . well, you can make up your own our-age-is-metaphor from there.

AFTER THAT gloomy intermission, I went dutifully back into the theater and was surprised to find that the last play of the evening, *Motel,* was funny, exciting, and, more important, carried with it a quality that makes me hope Mr. van Itallie may yet extract himself from the enticement of supermarket truths. The final play takes place in a motel room. A transient couple, portrayed by buskinned actors in oversized papier-maché torsos and masks, arrive and gratuitously let loose an orgy of wreckage and graffiti-scribbling. They exchange no words during the demolition that culminates in the utter destruction of the room and the dismemberment of the landlady who, throughout the barrage, has pleasantly chatted on about the modern comforts of the chamber under attack. The play seems to last no longer than ten minutes, but in that time van Itallie has given us a very distinct example of the sex and violence which no walls will contain no matter what the civilized restraints within.

Still, for all its merit, *Motel* says very little about van Itallie's future as a dramatist. He seems much better off on his own personal quests than attempting the large, satiric view of society. Like Miss Terry, Mr. van Itallie is concerned in the right manner about the right things, but this is no substitute for art. It is all very well to come down on the side of the angels—but not with such an embarrassing thump.

A PLAY WHICH comes down on the side of nothing is one which I have read but not yet seen. Still, since, like *Viet Rock* and *America Hurrah,* it is a satire on things American, I'll anticipate and include it here. The name of the work is *MacBird,* and for some time it has enjoyed the privilege of an under-

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ground existence, gossiped about and praised by cognoscenti who were certain that it would never find a public bookstore for distribution, much less a stage all its own. The reason for this early *sub rosa* life is that *MacBird* is a political grotesque which places our two last Presidents into a plot which loosely parallels *Macbeth*.

President Johnson has the title role, the late John Kennedy is the murdered King Duncan, while Bobby, of course, is the avenging Macduff. The language is a mixture of modern political slang and Shakespearean verse, a marriage that does have its delights, and wherever necessary the author adds to this pleasure by filching and reshaping a speech or two from other Shakespearean plays. But the words, though cleverly devised, are no end in themselves; they serve to show how pedestrian and comic the author's characters are when placed by the memory this language evokes. Thus Miss Garson, by no more than the style she chose, made her targets vulnerable to all sorts of legitimate abuse. Unfortunately, she goes too far, perhaps trapped by the Macbeth plot, perhaps trapped by hallucination, so that reality is so outdistanced that the satire loses much of its force. Shakespeare permitted even Macbeth some moral awareness, but Johnson is allowed none by Miss Garson, and so we laugh at this unmitigated villain because he is playing at heroics, but we don't take our mirth too seriously. Still, I look forward to seeing the play onstage, just to hear Lord Stevenson, the Egg of Head, utter the following:

To see or not to see? that
is the question
Whether 'tis wiser as a
statesman to ignore
Or to speak out against a
reign of evil
And by so doing, end there
for all time
The chance and hope to work
within for change.

Ah, and there's another metaphor for our age!

JACK RICHARDSON, *our regular theater critic, reviewed Peter Weiss's* The Investigation *in our December 1966 issue.* [*"Auschwitz On Stage"*].

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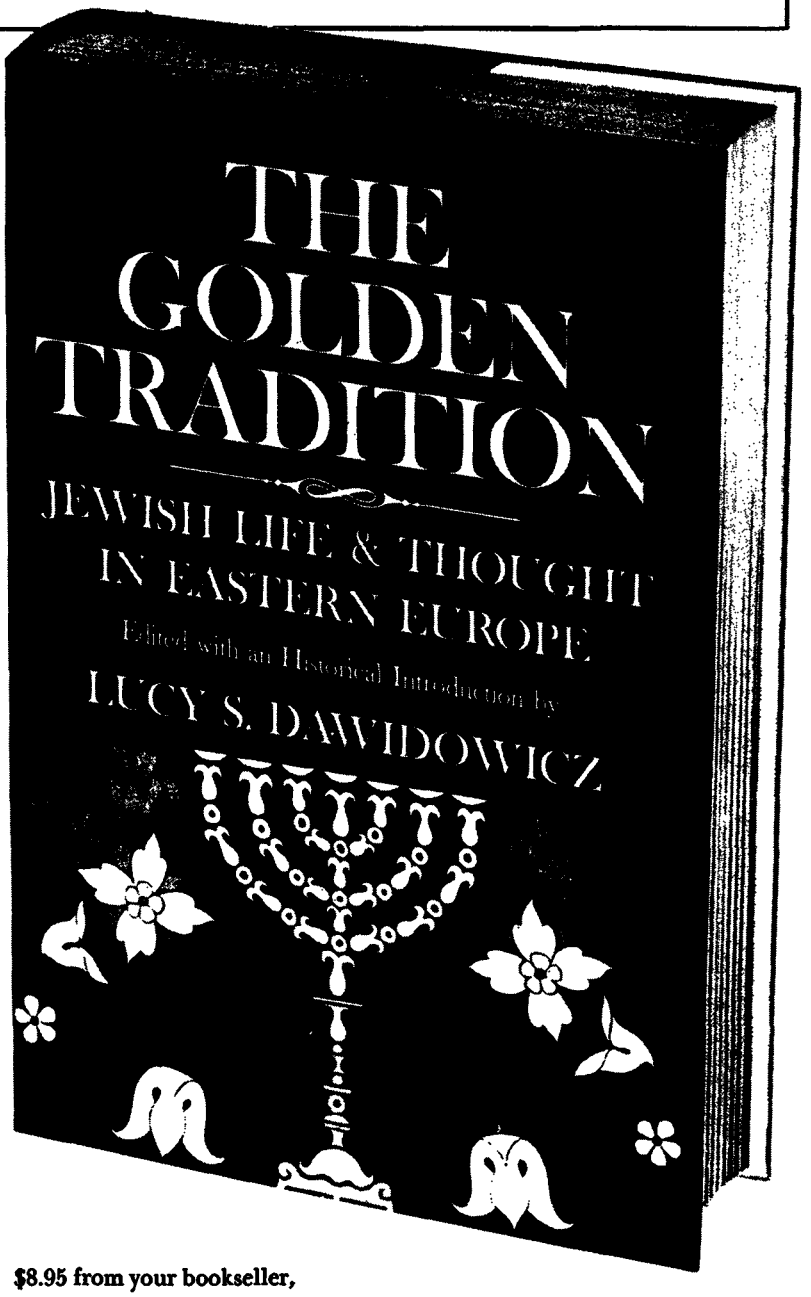

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RUSSIAN ANTI-SEMITISM

THE JEWS OF SILENCE. By ELIE WIESEL. Translated from the Hebrew with an Historical Afterword by NEAL KOZODOY. *Holt, Rinehart & Winston. 142 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by MAX HAYWARD

"THE CONDITION of the Jews in the Soviet Union is at once more grievous and more hopeful than I had imagined." This conclusion, drawn by Elie Wiesel from his journey to the Soviet Union in 1965, is not very startling, but it is valuable coming from an observer who has looked at the scene with the eye of a novelist. He tells us little that is new in terms of factual information or statistics (a great deal of which is supplied in the afterword by Neal Kozodoy, who also translated Mr. Wiesel's memoir from the Hebrew), but he conveys more vividly than anyone else has yet been able to, the strange and contradictory nature of the problem. There is no attempt at analysis, still less any claim to valid generalization about the mood of the nearly three million Jews in the Soviet Union, but after reading this book nobody will be able to deny that the state of Russian Jewry remains a legitimate cause for concern in the outside world.

Mr. Wiesel made his journey during the High Holy Days of 1965 and was thus able to see a most interesting development of recent years, namely the amazing observance of Simchat Torah as an annual occasion for the public manifestation of Jewish solidarity. From its timid beginning in Leningrad a few years ago, this has grown into an institution which, it seems, the Soviet authorities are no longer prepared to fight. Instead of breaking it up by force, they now set up searchlights in the street opposite the synagogue and spread a rumor that all who take part will be photographed. This is not a deterrent, however, and many thousands of Jews, of all ages, come from all over Moscow to demonstrate that the denial of adequate cultural facilities to Soviet Jews is ultimately a self-defeating policy. All that has been achieved is to make the synagogue a symbol of national identity for non-religious Jews and the only "legal" (though barely tolerated) meeting-place. The spirit in which Simchat Torah is celebrated by non-religious Jews is that of defiant acceptance of the fact that, while expected to assimilate, they are still the object of discrimination in public and professional life. By degrading the Jewish religion and vilifying Israel, the Soviet authorities have effectively reversed the earlier trend toward spontaneous acculturation and produced a growth of Jewish consciousness which astonished Mr. Wiesel. If a number of Western Jews are skeptical of an Israel that is easily accessible to them (and which some evidently believe makes excessive emotional demands on them), many Soviet Jews naturally idealize it. Mr. Wiesel, like a number of other recent visitors, gives many examples of a resurgence of Jewish self-awareness which it would be wrong, perhaps, to call nationalism, but which is inevitably expressed by intense interest in the traditional symbols of Jewish national and religious identity. The Soviet authorities are being taught the lesson that the surest way to nurture such sentiments is to deny them natural expression.

Perhaps the main question raised in this moving memoir is one that the author modestly does not try to resolve, but which left him perplexed as it has other travelers to the Soviet Union. This is the extraordinary fear displayed by Jews, particularly those of the older generation, who are encountered in the synagogues. As Mr. Wiesel points out, this terror, for which no simple explanation is ever given, is incompatible with the considerable lightening of the atmosphere in the Soviet Union since Stalin's death. The population at large no longer walks in terror. Why therefore this almost panic fear which many older Jews communicate to visitors from abroad?

IT WOULD BE presumptuous of me to suggest that there is some key, overlooked by Mr. Wiesel, to this marked discrepancy between the behavior of older (and probably for the most part religious) Jews, and the younger ones who fearlessly demonstrate their Jewishness by dancing in the streets under a blaze of searchlights. I would suggest, however, that part of the reason is that the older people are still in a state of shock, from which they may never recover, caused by the Black Years of 1948-53, following the Nazi massacres on Soviet territory. These people were of a generation that had seen the promise of freedom from discrimination for the first time constitutionally guaranteed, and which had been translated into practical terms by a widespread network of Jewish cultural institutions—even though, of course, this was never extended to religious freedom. While, therefore, the rest of the Soviet population may see many signs of hope and change for the better, the older Jews still live with the nightmare of the past.

It might help (but even this is doubtful, so deep is the trauma) if the Soviet authorities were to admit that a terrible wrong was done and were to make amends by allowing the restoration of some of the Jewish institutions destroyed between 1948 and 1953. The events of those years still cannot be publicly discussed. Although each of the Yiddish writers shot in 1952 has been "rehabilitated," there has

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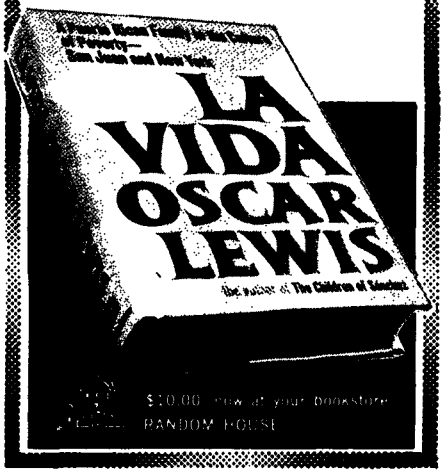

JEWISHNESS & the younger intellectuals

The controversial Commentary symposium will be back in print in July to meet the needs of libraries, researchers, colleges, and adult discussion groups. The reprint will include a summary by Milton Himmelfarb, a substantial number of letters the symposium evoked, and a study guide prepared by Werner Dannhauser.

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never been any mention of the fact that they were executed as a group and as Jews. Until these matters are brought out into the open, no Soviet Jew can feel confident of a better future.

Despite a few favorable developments in the last year or so (Kosygin's speech in Riga in which he denounced anti-Semitism, though still very much *in abstracto*; the publication of Kuznetsov's account of Babi Yar which, in an almost polemical way, emphasizes that the majority of the victims were Jewish; a marked improvement in the quality of *Sovietish Heimland*, etc.) there is still an immovable reluctance on the part of the Soviet authorities to admit that there is a real problem of anti-Semitism in the USSR. Any real improvement can only begin with such an admission. The Jewish problem will remain serious until the moment when there is published some complaint by a Soviet Jew about the continuing restrictions on Jewish culture and the operation of a bias in public and professional life. What is also striking is the lack of propaganda against prejudice—specifically against anti-Semitism. Clearly, if a problem is held not to exist there can be no propaganda against it.

But there has been interesting evidence recently that the whole problem of prejudice can be discussed, at least at an academic level. A remarkable article by Professor I. Kon, in the September 1966 issue of *Novy Mir*, "Social and Psychological Roots of Ethnic Prejudice," acquaints Soviet readers with work by American sociologists (Allport, Merton, and others) on this problem. Needless to say, the polite fiction is maintained that anti-Semitism is basically a problem of capitalist society, but Soviet readers are used to seeing various problems of their own society thinly disguised as "American" ones. It is at once dismaying and pathetic that such subterfuges have to be resorted to, but even this is progress.

Mr. Wiesel's book reminds us, however, that the fate of Russian Jewry still vitally depends on being held constantly in the public eye abroad. There is no doubt whatsoever that such alleviations as have taken place in the last few years are due as much to outside pressure as to shifts in internal Soviet policy.

HISTORICAL AMBIVALENCE

THE INTELLECTUAL HISTORY OF EUROPE. By FRIEDRICH HEER. Translated by JONATHAN STEINBERG. *World. 558 pp. $12.95.*

Reviewed by H. STUART HUGHES

PROFESSOR HEER—who teaches at the University of Vienna—has been kind enough to provide us with a guide to an inordinately compact and perplexing book. This introduction, which figured as an epilogue in the original German edition of 1953, specifies the main themes, twelve in number, which run through his work. Of these the first alone need be quoted *in extenso*:

> There has always been a struggle between "above" and "below" in Europe's inner history. The "upper" culture of Christianity, educated humanism, and rationalism has struggled against a "lower" culture of the masses. This cultural "underground" included both the deeper levels of the individual personality and the customs, manners, and faith of the people. During the 19th century, which really means the era that ended for Europe in 1945, this struggle entered a new phase. For the first time, movements from below broke the surface of the upper culture. Whether these movements were rationalist or irrationalist, spiritualist or naturalist, they were marked by great fanaticism and enthusiasm. Their leaders were determined to create a new salvation from the midst of the people or from the depths of the human ego.

In short, the pre-Christian emotional life of the European masses—which found its expression in the Middle Ages in the "volcanic natures" of the great heretics and reformers—finally exploded in our own time in the abominations of Communism and Nazism. Encouraged by the tolerant attitude of democratic governments, the "underground" for a brief period was able to gain the mastery of Europe. Its political and military ravages have now been checked; but the

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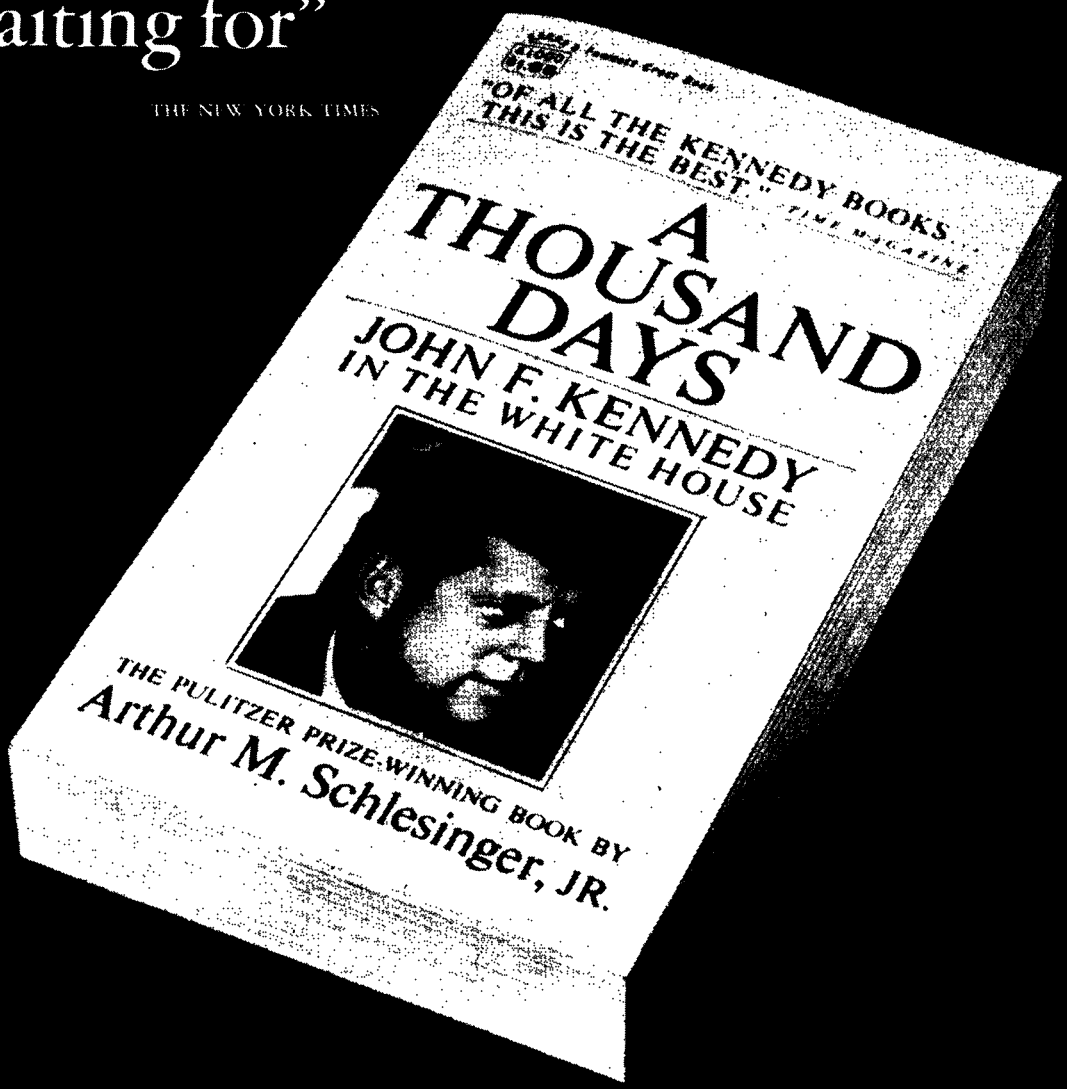

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future of the civilized European remains doubtful in the extreme.

In justice to Professor Heer's own polemical passion, it is only fair to recall that he himself has suffered arrest at the hands of both the Nazis and the Russians and that Vienna a decade and a half ago was far less tranquil and far more exposed than it is today. One should also note that he is by no means unambiguously on the side of the "upper" culture. Although he views history in a Catholic perspective, he is highly critical of the Church's policy during most of the contemporary era, and he reproaches the representatives of the "orthodoxies and the ruling systems" for their past unwillingness to engage in an open "dialogue with the enemy." Much bloodshed and suffering, he implies, might have been spared if Europe's monarchs and churchmen had adopted a more accommodating attitude.

At the very start, then, Professor Heer reveals his ambivalence toward his own enterprise. And the complexity is compounded by the fact that he discovers alongside Europe what he calls the "world of the Three Rings"—the world of Mediterranean culture, Judaic, Islamic, and Byzantine—whose permissiveness made it on occasion the ally of the "underground." In his early chapters, this Southern sphere of tolerance and urbanity figures as culturally superior to Europe in the narrower sense; in one of his most telling passages he depicts how around 1200 the North European spokesmen of the "upper" culture concentrated their intellectual forces against the Mediterraneans in a "gravitational center represented roughly by the area covering Paris, Oxford, Brussels, Cologne, and Basel." Somewhat later, however, he shifts the locale of this half-external menace from South to East: it now becomes the offshoot of Byzantium incarnate in Holy Russia. While Professor Heer is unable to withhold his admiration from the Medieval Southerners, he is far less openhearted toward the subsequent culture of the East, which he finds almost wholly negative.

Since the "enemy" is both Mediterranean-sophisticated and Northern-folkish, the work both of great souls such as Francis of Assisi and Joan of Arc, and of the brutish collective unconscious of the masses, the account of its successive manifestations covers an enormous range of cultural history. Still more, as one advances in Professor Heer's book, it becomes apparent that most of what is exciting in Europe's tradition is located in one sense or another on the wrong side of the barricades. Whether he himself is fully aware of the extent of his own ambivalence remains open to doubt. But it is certain that his account of the Albigensian Heresy is far more lively than what he has to say about St. Thomas Aquinas. And his analysis of the "theatrical" culture of the baroque—another *tour de force* of deft characterization—is far from flattering to this last effort at an all-inclusive synthesis. The figures that stand out most compellingly in his discussion are the extremists and the deviants—Luther, Pascal, and the rest; the custodians of "official" culture appear wooden and pallid.

If Professor Heer had left the matter at that, all might have been well. A culturally supercilious and structurally exasperating book might have been rescued by its verve, its immense scholarship, and its generosity to those below the cultural dividing-line. But in a final chapter on the 19th century, the author has extended his account to modern times, where he has gone thoroughly off the track. (Here again it is only fair to add that a further volume dealing more fully with the contemporary age is promised.) When he reaches his contemporaries and near-contemporaries, Professor Heer carries his underlying thesis to outlandish lengths. He tells us in effect—we are back to his initial themes—that there is nothing intellectually novel about modernity: "When the new popular movements came out into the open, the most remarkable and exciting fact of all European intellectual history was unconsciously brought to light: despite a persecution lasting 1,000 years, not one 'heretical' idea, philosophy, or conviction had been exterminated." They simply reappeared in secular and political disguise. And the same was true of even the most daring speculations of modern science: "Heisenberg's 'uncertainty principle' is an expression of a typical German-Protestant irrationalism. Einstein's unified theory of the relations of space, time, energy, and matter . . . has its home in the world of the Three Rings." Freud is simply a belated romantic. As for the popular manifestations of contemporary culture, the films (I imagine Professor Heer is referring to their spiritual ravages) have "killed more people than the machine-gun." Fortunately, television had only begun its slaughter at the time his book was written.

For someone who regards the early 20th century as *the* great age of European thought, statements such as these make puzzling reading. And I become still more bemused when I recall that as a very young man I thought much as Professor Heer does. Although his specific formulations may sound novel and jarring, the underlying attitude in his book is not new at all: it is the cultural elitism of Europe's beleaguered mandarins. Echoes of Ortega and Spengler resound through his work. Like them, he cannot resist the temptation to wrench a historical particular out of context and endow it with a portentous significance. Along with them, he thinks in terms of "Europe's collapse." We may read his work with profit—and even possibly enjoyment—as still another talented effort to fit the pieces of intellectual history into an aesthetically convincing design. But Professor Heer's elitist lamentations will be of no use to us in approaching—indeed, will only confuse—the problem we face, as late 20th-century men, of sorting out what is still relevant and what is of merely antiquarian interest in our overwhelming cultural heritage.

AFTER ANDY HARDY

I. E.: THE AUTOBIOGRAPHY OF MICKEY ROONEY. By MICKEY ROONEY. *Putnam. 256 pp. $4.95.*

Reviewed by JOSEPH EPSTEIN

For a great many Americans now in their thirties and early forties, the notion of what being a teenager was all about derived from the Andy Hardy movies. From the van-

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tage point of those plush chairs in those nutty old baroque movie houses, they shared vicariously in the adventures of young Andy, as played by Mickey Rooney, and to a large extent they accepted his middle-class version of the reality of growing up in middle-class America. It was a time before hangups were fashionable; people in those days may indeed have suffered nervous breakdowns, developed ulcers from money worries, and had heart attacks, but one would never have guessed it from the Andy Hardy movies. Nor did the series betray any hint of the fact that kids might have had pimples, hated their parents, or were itching to get their hands under the sweater of that blonde cheerleader—played by Lana Turner.

As for Andy Hardy himself, he experienced no conflicts, troubles, or even problems; instead, he was beset by little difficulties. A typical sexual difficulty, for example, might consist of how to get the convertible top of his car to stay down while he was trying to park it on lover's lane; a social difficulty, of how to get the Judge's (his father's) tux altered in time for the Spring prom. Andy was forever getting into these fixes. In one episode, he bought a jalopy on the installment plan from a used-car dealer. When he discovered he couldn't meet the payments—which totaled all of seven dollars a month—he had no recourse but to go to his father for help. After a gentle reprimand and a man-to-man talk about economics, the Judge agreed to lend him the money, though he made it clear, needless to say, that Andy would have to repay the loan by doing extra little jobs around the house.

The Andy Hardy movies, then, were fantasies portraying life as simple and people as fundamentally good; if a problem did crop up—well, one could always turn to the Judge. It was all very unreal, of course, but in those days one could at least hope that it *might* be real, or, at any rate, it was easier to suspend one's disbelief about it. Cancer, in those days, was not yet a word guaranteed to still conversation in any room; psychoanalysis was still something to joke about; and our theologians talked about sin instead of "the precarious bal-

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ance of nuclear terror." It is a sign of the great changes in American life since then that the very thought of reviving the Andy Hardy series at this time is almost inconceivable. Today, alas, the films would have to have titles like *Andy Hardy, Junkie;* or *Andy Hardy, Unwed Father.*

By way of documentation of the unreality of the American middle-class fantasy that was incorporated into the Andy Hardy movies, we now have Mickey Rooney's *Autobiography.* Andy Hardy was played by Mickey, but in real life (if you'll pardon the expression) Mickey never played Andy Hardy; most decidedly, Mickey did not take the Judge's advice to heart. Mr. Rooney's life does almost too much violence to the fantasy of Andy Hardy. It is painful to think of Andy Hardy, that nice young man from across the street, having to face a life of multiple divorces, trouble with the Internal Revenue, bankruptcy, professional failure, and excessive loneliness.

ANDY HARDY was a boy of another time; Mickey Rooney comes closer to being a man of our own. As chronicled in the pages of this likable autobiography, his fall is exceptional not so much because Mr. Rooney is so exceptional a man, but because he fell from so far up. Until this point in his life, his ruin seems not so much monumental as pretty nearly complete—which is just about the condition of the fantasy of the Andy Hardy movies.

Mr. Rooney's life has been lived within a show-business context; he has known no other. Sired by a burlesque-show "top banana" out of a chorus-line "end pony," he was christened Joe Yule, Jr., after his father. The earliest years of his life were spent in that sleazy milieu that has since come to be sentimentalized into the good old days of show biz: the long, dull train rides, the bad food cooked over sterno cans, and the other niceties of rooming-house living. After his parents separated, his mother, a self-starter if ever there was one, took the boy out to Hollywood with her. She hired an agent for her son, who now became, in Hollywood parlance, "a property." It wasn't long before the young "property" latched on to his first "vehicle," the role of Mickey McGuire in the Mickey McGuire series; he played a kid in short pants who went around in a derby, with a cigar stub stuck in his face. Shortly thereafter, his name was changed to Mickey McGuire for the profound reason that it enabled the hustlers who produced the series to keep from paying royalties to the cartoonist who created the comic-strip character of the same name. To accommodate new roles, his name was changed again, this time legally, to Mickey Rooney. "My very name," he comments, "is the product of publicity."

He soon became a very valuable "property" indeed. Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, the studio for which he did the Andy Hardy movies, was no slum landlord. As long as Mickey Rooney made money for them, he was carefully tended. He was sent to a special school for show business children. A classmate was Judy Garland, the Fabulous Judy, the wreckage of whose life was later to amount to as sad a pile of debris as his own. While still in his teens, Mr. Rooney was earning as much as $300,000 a year. (This at a time when actors did not get contracts that allowed them a cut of the gross, as they do now.) Metro provided a Vice President for him, a sort of superintendent on the premises whose job it was to watch over the increasingly valuable "property." And the young Mr. Rooney needed watching. He breezed around Los Angeles in a red convertible; he was a sack-artist of no mean pretensions; though still too young to drink legally, he frequented night-clubs and prevailed upon older friends to sneak him shots in the john.

The first phase of Mr. Rooney's fall was marked by his marriage to Ava Gardner. It was his first failure and the responsibility, he concedes, was his own. What attracted him to Miss Gardner, aside from her magnificent good looks, was her aloofness, her absolute cool in the presence of so renowned a star as himself. She was nineteen, he was twenty-one; she had just arrived in Hollywood, he had been established there for years; she was a country girl from North Carolina, he was a cosmopolitan millionaire. Miss Gardner, evidently, was insuffi-

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ciently impressed by the contrast. He went after her with all the resources available to a young Hollywood squire. Finally, after months of employing what he calls a "full-court press," she agreed to marry him. Metro didn't approve of the match; the thought of Andy Hardy slipping between the sheets nightly with so elegant a lady as Miss Gardner, they felt, would not further endear him to the folks in Keokuk. But over the long haul it didn't much matter. Soon after, having put up with the most outrageous husbandly behavior, Miss Gardner wanted—and got—out of the marriage. Even now, Mr. Rooney seems not to have completely gotten over her.

Mr. Rooney's marriage to Miss Gardner was the first of six marriages. "When I proposed to Ava," he tells us, "I was almost unconscious with passion, when I proposed to Betty Jane [Rase] I was almost unconscious with booze, when I proposed to Martha [Vickers] I was almost unconscious with despair, and when I proposed to Elaine [Mahnken] I was almost unconscious period." Rooney bears these women little malice; Miss Gardner excepted, he has almost no regrets. One's sense of the graciousness he displays toward his ex-wives is heightened when one discovers how badly some of these ladies have taken him in divorce settlements. The following, for example, is what his fourth wife, Miss Mahnken, took away from their childless marriage:

"The house in Studio City.
The house in Lake Arrowhead.
All the furniture.
The motorboat.
The Chrysler.
The horses.
Assorted jewelry.
Five thousand dollars cash.
My agreement to pay her $21,000 a year for ten years."

Why has Mr. Rooney married so often? He claims it is because of his fear of solitude, because he cannot stand being alone. However, it would be more precise to say he could not stand being alone while his career came tumbling down around him. His wives did not constitute the whole of the wrecking crew. There were also the idiot investments, the bad agents, the obsessive gambling. At one point, a Baltimore hustler lent him a lot of money and, when Mr. Rooney entered the Army during World War II, lent his mother even more. When he returned, the hustler announced that the two of them were now in business together. Rooney thereupon left Metro and set up an independent production company with his new partner. It flopped. When he returned to Metro, hat in hand, Dore Schary was presiding, and busy ushering out the end of the star system. Rooney began to get bad parts, and there were few even of these. And this headlong descent was punctuated by costly divorces. One day he looked up and discovered he was bankrupt. He had run through *twelve million dollars!* A friend was appointed to inform him that, "public-relations-wise," it would probably be a good idea for him to stay away from Academy Award dinners.

THE LAST section of Mr. Rooney's *Autobiography* recounts his slight comeback of recent years. Television, which he recognizes for the mediocrity it is, saved him. A few years back he played in a Rod Serling TV script entitled *The Comedian,* and people were reminded of what had been true all along—that he is a capable actor. Since then, his parts and paychecks have been increasing. Through it all, Mr. Rooney has somehow survived. Now forty-six years old and balding, he is a tough little guy, and one would have to be heartless not to wish him well. As for Andy Hardy, I prefer to believe that he died somewhere on the beach at Corregidor after single-handedly wiping out a machine-gun nest and then throwing himself on a hand grenade in order to save his buddies. May he rest in peace.

PLAYING GAMES

THE TIME OF THE ANGELS. By IRIS MURDOCH. *Viking. 245 pp. $5.00.*

Reviewed by ROBERT GARIS

IRIS MURDOCH, who writes her own special brand of allegorical fiction, has recently been having troubles with this tricky form, partly because she writes so much—*The*

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Time of the Angels is her tenth novel since 1954. Any allegory is schematic but Miss Murdoch's are more so than most, and her schemes are unusually visible because she likes to cast them in the mode of a fairly conventional realism. Her allegorical figures always stand for boldly contrasting ways of life and her plotting always aims at a brilliantly surprising dialectic of strange relations and revelations in which these ways of life define, criticize, and evaluate each other. It is easy enough to see the motive in all this, to realize that the characters have to be an oddly assorted group in order to define each other sharply and quickly and that for the same reason the action has to be fast and unexpected; but it is also easy to see how much tact and taste Miss Murdoch needs in order to avoid the effect of mannered and arbitrary contrivance.

In a few of her novels, Miss Murdoch's methods have been excitingly successful. *A Severed Head,* the best of them all, is full of improbable people and behavior, yet for all that it is also a serious allegory of modern love. Like everybody else in the novel, its hero carries on a grotesquely rapid and various love-life, but that's not the main point; it is, in fact, almost the accidental by-product of the method. For the hero is obviously a modern Everyman, and his love-life represents his emergence from conventional social and sexual role-playing into the freedom of being able to fall in love with a woman who represents neither mother, daughter, sister, nor even friend, but the pure unknown otherness of the opposite sex—in this case, a half-Jewish lady don named Honor Klein. This character is a patently artificial assemblage of qualities all expressly calculated to make it as unlikely as possible that the hero will fall in love with her, and in another sort of novel she would be ruinously implausible. If she is a little hard to take even in *A Severed Head,* that is not because the characterization is contrived, but rather because it is clumsily and naively contrived. Yet Miss Murdoch manages to get by with this invention because its point is after all quite clear; and because her execution of the rest of the scheme is splendidly intelligent and witty in the speed and unexpectedness of its dialectical leaps. Though everything that happens is strange, its meaning is always very clear, and this combination makes the book exciting.

But *A Severed Head* seems important because it is so intelligent a set of variations on major themes derived from Freud, Sartre, Lawrence, and others. In fact, this kind of eclecticism is almost a necessity for Miss Murdoch. Only when her themes are so important and familiar as to seem true, and when her dialectical wit is working with particular agility, can the lack of emotional depth of her novels pass unnoticed. But how many such themes are there, and how many bright and interesting variations on them can even so lively a mind as Iris Murdoch's invent? There's the problem, and Miss Murdoch, who wants to write a lot of novels, has recently been showing the strain of having to come up with more originality and novelty than any ten writers put together could hope for.

THOUGH ALL writers repeat themselves, some don't have to worry about it: their sincerity of imagination can create the illusion that they are looking at something in the real world long and closely for the first time in order to understand what it means, even though that meaning may happen to be one they have discovered frequently before. Miss Murdoch can never create this illusion; it is simply beyond her or perhaps not interesting to her; and so when she repeats herself, she is in trouble. The need to invent a new quasi-novelistic costume for the old abstraction can sometimes produce a particularly awful mixture of artificiality and banality. One of her recurrent types, for instance, is the kind of person who is in easy contact with "simple innocent things, with thoughtless affections and free happy laughter and dogs passing by in the street." In this definition of the type (which comes from *The Time of the Angels*), the language itself, particularly those dogs in the street, shows the strain I am talking about,

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as do the two representatives of the type in the novel: plump Pattie O'Driscoll, the illegitimate, cappuccino-colored maid of the house, and Eugene Peshkov, the educated, well-born Russian exile who is the janitor. Pattie is a game try and I wished Miss Murdoch well with her at the beginning, but I felt less amiable toward the corny Russian with his quiet dignity, his solid manly figure, his memories of "the pink front of the big house by the Moika," his precious icon of the Trinity. And the allegorical action in which these characters figure is also mechanically self-imitative. Peshkov loves Pattie who loves him in return, but he is also loved by Muriel, who is just the sort of woman Peshkov could never find attractive: tense, intellectual, cool, withdrawn. Muriel in turn rejects the advances of Peshkov's son Leo, an alienated-modern-youth type, whom she half-heartedly tries to pander into an affair with her cousin Elizabeth, suffering from some obscure illness. In short, a regulation Murdoch love-circuit, but in this case no charge of interesting—much less new—meaning is passed through it, and one gets all the mannerism of the Murdoch method with none of its rewards.

THE LOVE between Pattie and Peshkov can never work out because she is the slave-mistress of Carel Fisher, a half-mad apostate Anglican priest who engenders and controls the sinister atmosphere of the whole novel. This character and this atmosphere seem to me to represent a more willful failure on Miss Murdoch's part. Lacking access to genuine imaginative intensity, she has recently taken to raising the stakes wildly in order to make the game more exciting, as in the coarse gothicism of *The Unicorn* and the absurdly ambitious political and social meanings to which *The Red and the Green* was so plainly inadequate. The murky setting of *The Time of the Angels* is far more concretely and sensitively realized than anything in Miss Murdoch's recent work, but the same cannot be said for its main character, whose sensationally lurid moral identity is simply not paid for by honest intellectual energy on the author's part.

Carel Fisher is a priest who has lost faith in the unity of the godhead, but not in his vocation as priest. He becomes, then, something of a satanist, exploring the world of the evil "angels of multiplicity" whom the absence of God has set loose; he first acts out impermissible impulses, then tries to reestablish a demonic unity by demanding the absolute devotion of those he has corrupted. Miss Murdoch's job then is to invent suitably thrilling impermissible acts for her satanist to perform, and it is one that she finds all too easy. Fisher's relation with Pattie is one such experiment in evil; a second is his relation with the sickly Elizabeth, who turns out to be his daughter (Miss Murdoch always keeps plenty of incest on hand). Both of these relationships are justified by the mythology of Fisher's new religion in which the Virgin has a dual identity: she is the Sugar Plum Fairy, as played by Pattie; and the Swan Queen or the Sleeping Beauty as played by Elizabeth—for the new liturgy is supplied by Tchaikovsky's ballet music, which Fisher plays incessantly on the phonograph.

THIS GAMY material has interesting possibilities, of course, and I read along with enthusiasm as it was being divulged; yet at the end I felt cheated. Miss Murdoch spends a lot of energy making us shudder about the perversity of it all, and far too little defining that perversity, or even deciding how seriously she herself wants to take it. Instead of the working out of an idea, we

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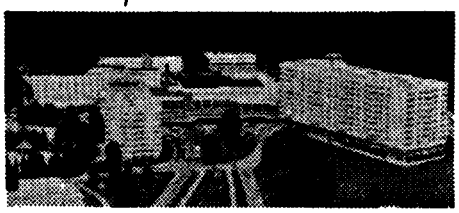

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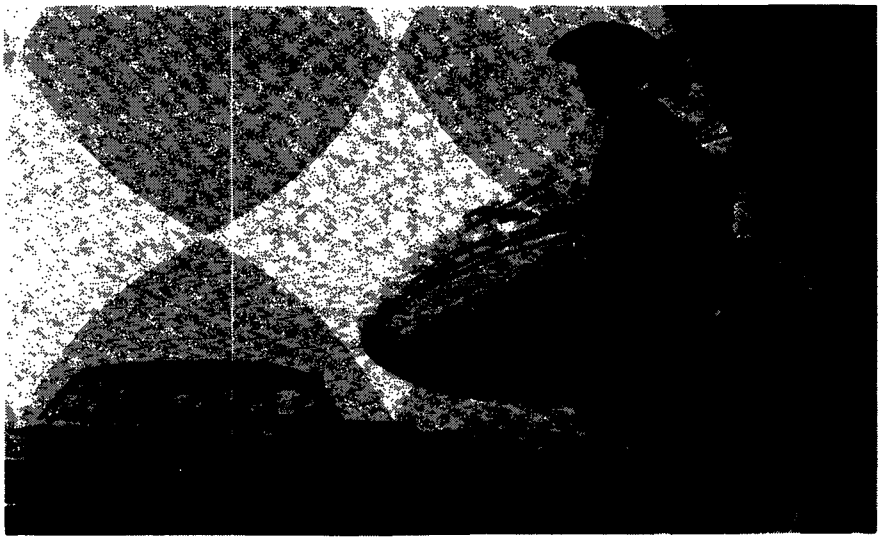
get mystery-mongering, indirection, and finally a chic and lazy ambiguity.

Before the revelation of incest, Fisher is never presented directly, but always through dark intimations: through the swish of his soutane or "tall and dense in his black cassock as a tower of darkness"; his sinister power is constantly being hinted at. When he finally appears before us directly, it is in a sadistic argument about religion and morals with his spinsterish younger brother, Marcus, surely the feeblest debater a satanist has ever squelched.

> But, but," said Marcus, and his voice seemed to be turning into a raucous gabble, "but there *is* goodness, whatever you say, there *is* morality, it's just *there,* it makes a difference, our concern for others—" Carel laughed softly.

Now Marcus is engaged in writing a philosophic treatise whose aim is to demythologize morals, and though this work is treated with some irony in the novel, its author is presumably capable of more than this gushy helplessness. The point is obviously that Marcus is supposed to be succumbing to his brother's sinister power, but if we buy this we are buying something very cheap; we are buying the banal image of the grown man turning into the impotent little brother and at the same time we are buying Miss Murdoch's lazy decision to face her hero with an opponent who can offer no meaningful criticism of his moral and religious position. Meanwhile, Fisher gets off some things that Miss Murdoch seems more than a little proud of: "'Are there others? Only in the infliction of pain is the effect so contained in the cause as to convince us of the existence of others.'" It's a nice remark but, as Gertrude Stein said, remarks aren't literature. Unless Miss Murdoch puts more energy into her games, even her warmest admirers aren't going to want to play for very much longer.



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POLARITIES

ANGER, AND BEYOND: THE NEGRO WRITER IN THE UNITED STATES. Edited with an introduction by HERBERT HILL. *Harper & Row. 226 pp. $5.95.*

Reviewed by JERVIS ANDERSON

IT WASN'T UNTIL a while ago, while reading a review of Claude Brown's *Manchild in the Promised Land,* that I became acquainted with the term, "Negro genre writing." I wondered why I hadn't come across it before, for I sensed in the expression a certain smoothness of texture which suggested it had been in use for a long time. However, I had no difficulty recognizing its meaning: "Negro genre writing" was a clear enough reference to an alleged penchant in the work of Negro writers for "anger, rage, and social protest." In the words of the critic, Albert Murray, most white commentators "seem to assume that for the Negro, literature is simply incidental to protest."

I was disturbed at the time—and still am—by the patness of the term, its smug certainty that nothing had happened within, say, the last thirty years or so to impair its relevance as a description of any and all writing that happened to be done by a Negro. Though I was willing to acknowledge that the term may have had a certain historical aptness, it seemed very apparent that today—except for a few defiantly regressive instances—most serious Negro writers do not see literature as simply incidental to protest. One would have to have, it seemed to me, some deep psychic stake in preserving old Negro stereotypes to believe that a category like "genre writing" could describe accurately or honestly the novels of Ralph Ellison and William Melvin Kelly, the plays of the late Lorraine Hansberry, the poetry of Melvin Tolson and Gwendolyn Brooks, and—to a lesser extent perhaps—the work of James Baldwin and Ann Petry, to name only the most obvious instances that come to mind.

So it came as a surprise, in reading this collection of essays on Negro writing, to discover that dis-

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passionate white critics aren't the only ones who seem to believe that the only proper place for Negro writing is in the protest jug. A number of the Negro contributors to this volume—which grew out of a seminar on Negro writing held at Berkeley in 1964—seem to share the view that the only value worth looking for in Negro literature is its quotient of social commitment —i.e., social protest. A good part of the book, for example, is given over to a discussion of that period in the 20's which marked the heyday of Negro protest writing—but a discussion so tender and nostalgic as to constitute a kind of pious ritual celebration. Whatever misgivings otherwise perceptive critics like Saunders Redding or Arna Bontemps may feel about certain of the lesser products of this particular literary movement go unvoiced in the general glow of nostalgia and warmth that pervades the occasion. Behind their reluctance to express anything so rigorous as a literary judgment, one discerns a paramount consideration: Negro writing, springing as it did from oppression, is to be regarded as a "literature of necessity," and as such automatically exempt from "mere" literary criteria; to view it otherwise would be to compromise one's commitment to the imperatives of the Negro struggle.

OF ALL THE essays in the book, the one by Ossie Davis—"The Wonderful World of Law and Order"—expressed this view at its starkest and most explicit:

> The Negro in this country has to write protest, because he is a protestant. He can't help but be. The protest must continue to be loud, bitter, and haranguing. . . . It must be angry. It must be aimed at corrective action here and now.

A more complex statement of what is essentially the same position is offered by Arna Bontemps in his essay on Jean Toomer, one of the first Negro novelists to turn his back on the didactic tradition.

Toomer's first novel, *Cane*, was hailed immediately after its publication as an outstanding work of art, and continues to be ranked today—with Ellison's *Invisible Man* —as one of the two important novels to have been written by a Negro in America. Yet Toomer never succeeded in attracting more than the narrowest readership, either for *Cane* or for his few later works, and is said to have despaired in the end of the possibility of a Negro's ever winning acceptance as a writer in the United States. Disillusioned, he finally stopped writing altogether.

In Bontemps's account of all this, the attentive reader cannot help but detect a certain note of mocking pleasure. There is the unmistakable suggestion throughout that Toomer would have been a lot better off had he stuck to writing the kind of straightforward protest novels—like Claude McKay's *Home to Harlem*, for instance—that all his colleagues in Harlem in the 20's were turning out; that he deserved what happened to him for allowing himself to be flattered by white critics into writing "imaginative" literature. Throwing in the fact that Toomer happened to have been light-skinned enough to pass for white, Bontemps concludes:

> What Toomer was trying to indicate to us by the course he took still intrigues, but I suspect he realizes by now that there is no further need to signify. The secrets are out. As the song says, "There is no hiding place down there."

If Bontemps, a veteran of the literary battles of the 20's, can be excused on the ground of ancient commitments, and Ossie Davis can be dismissed as less than a working writer, LeRoi Jones cannot be let off that easily. Not only is he a serious working writer, presumably experienced in the requirements of art, he is also—considering the French, German, and Irish literary "influences" he so frequently cites—fairly conversant with what, for want of a better term, could be called the modern sensibility, irrespective of national or ethnic considerations. Yet from his essay one gets the impression of total and all-pervading irresolution, of an absolute failure to have reconciled in himself a whole range of fatally irreconcilable opposites, beginning with the primary opposition between his racist enthusiasms and his obvious hun-

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ger for artistic coolness. One comes away from this essay of Jones's—as from so much of his other work—with the impression of a tormented, irresolute figure in a chaos of opinion, one arm reaching toward Mecca, the other clutching at Chicago, hoping perhaps—if only to simplify his problem—that the hand pointing toward Mecca won't be quite long enough to reach.

TO BEGIN WITH, Jones issues a firm and resolute call to Negro writers to dissociate themselves from the mainstream of American culture—a tired, white stream, wholly polluted. This cry is by now familiar enough and even, one must admit, stirring. Yet what does it mean? What, precisely, could the content of writing be that was divorced from "the mainstream of American culture"? Where is one to begin? As though admitting to the purely rhetorical nature of these brave words, Jones then turns around a few passages later, and praises for "top-level performance in the areas in which each functions" such diverse Negro writers and spokesmen as W. E. B. Dubois (his later radical politics notwithstanding), Richard Wright, Jean Toomer, Langston Hughes, Ralph Ellison, and James Baldwin. Where, then, one is inclined to ask, have these writers been functioning, if not in the mainstream of American culture; and how is one to define them if not in its terms; and by what standards of excellence is Jones praising them, if not by the same ones critics have been using all along in according these writers their reputations? Indeed, considering the increasing toll that ideological considerations have taken of him recently, Jones is surprisingly generous toward Negro writers in the present essay; by contrast, writing a few years ago in the *Saturday Review,* he denounced "the impressive mediocrity" of Negro literature.

Jones is at his best when he is willing to shed the mantle of the ideologue and get down to specific cases, as in the following passage:

> We've lived here, which is what everyone else has done, and we have memories of our particular and specific ways of living here, and that is valuable as a statement not only about this place but about the world.

This passage makes a lot of sense, and it even contains useful prescriptions for the Negro artist, but it comes soon after one in which Jones has recommended to Negro writers the artistic method of Negro jazz musicians, who are free to work without having "to respect any tradition outside of their own feelings." Quite apart from the question of whether even jazz musicians have this bold a freedom—so frequently, and, I suspect, erroneously attributed to them by popular romantic myth—what possible meaning could such a prescription have for a working writer? How is a writer—Negro or otherwise—to render in intelligible terms his specific statement about his specific way of life without taking into account the prose tradition in which he is working? In other words, how is one to talk about writing without talking about technique, aesthetic method, all the rest of it? The response of Ralph Ellison to Jones's *Blues People* is perhaps not insignificant in this connection:

> Attempt to discuss jazz as a hermetic expression of Negro sensibility, and immediately we must consider what the "mainstream" of American music really is. . . . Negro musicians have never, as a group, felt alienated from any music sounded within their hearing . . . . and it would be impossible to pinpoint the time when they were not shaping what Jones calls the mainstream of American music. Indeed, what group of musicians has made more of the sound of the American experience?

YET HILL'S BOOK is not so onesided as I may have suggested. For all its lengthy and nostalgic celebration of the value of social commitment, it also uses the occasion to point out that Negro fiction can broaden its universe of concern without necessarily losing touch with the peculiar area of experience that gave it life. It does so largely through the inclusion of two essays on the work of Ralph Ellison who, among all contemporary Negro artists, has most notably attempted to liberate Negro writing and

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Negro thought about writing from the orthodoxy—the bondage, I would even say—of sheer racial protest, and to remind us of our citizenship within the wider and more complex boundaries of the American experience. These studies, by Robert Bone and Albert Murray, of the varieties of interests and attitudes, cultural and aesthetic, that are blended in Ellison's sensibility, and, as a consequence, integrated in his work, are without doubt the finest in the book and—along with the piece by Nat Hentoff on the literary uses of the blues tradition—worth the price of admission.

On the face of it, then, it would seem from a reading of *Anger, and Beyond* that Negro writing today is caught between two poles: at one end is the neo-didactic LeRoi Jones, in whose hands literature tends to heat up into racist pamphleteering that screams as much for blood as for freedom now. And on the other is the traditionalist Ellison, working out of the totality of his experience as man, Negro, Negro American, and heir to Western literature. Such a polarization does, indeed, exist, but only up to a point, for in recent years more and more young Negro writers have been acquiring an interest in that "craftsmanship" whose lack Ellison has so frequently deplored. Once they have mastered their trade, however, these young writers will still be faced with the question of whether to adopt Ellison's content as well as his form, or to pursue substantively a new course which in the final analysis might even bring them into the vicinity of Jones.

To say this is to suggest that Ellison has his limits as a guide, however much we admit that his work does indeed point out new directions for Negro fiction, and however much we admire his efforts at a fusion and integration of cultural and literary sensibilities. The new generation of writers may well feel obligated to offer their own "necessary modifications" to Ellison's work, for it is, after all, entirely possible that they may view Ellison's effort to make whole again "the shattered psyche of the nation" (as Robert Bone puts it) as a matter of mere practical expe-

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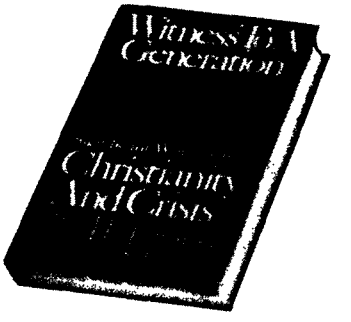

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diency and, consequently, as an effort pervaded by moral compromise. In other words, it might just be their view that the psyche of the nation, as it is presently constituted, needs not so much to be repaired and reconstructed as reconceived and recreated.

Those, however, who hold this view would seem to impose upon themselves the obligation to move beyond nihilism and to attempt a sane and methodical critique of that psyche, as well as to propose a set of more viable values by which it might recreate itself.

It is my impression that they have yet to do so. So far as one has heard from the radical position, so far, in fact, as this position might be said to be represented by Jones, the critique seems to have been drowned out in emotional rasping and ranting, and one does not see any definitive alternative stance taking shape. The new and coherent radicalism may, of course, still emerge in the future, and if and when it does, it will be entitled to our patient consideration. Until such time, however, as we are confronted with proposals that represent more than mere willful, petulant anarchy, we have no choice but to endorse strongly the responsible, courageous, and humane direction taken by Ralph Ellison, and by all those who share his vision.

Books Reviewers in this Issue

Max Hayward *is the well-known authority on Russian literature, and the co-translator of Boris Pasternak's* Doctor Zhivago.

H. Stuart Hughes, *who teaches at Harvard, is the author of a number of works on European history.*

Joseph Epstein, *a frequent contributor, reviewed* The Most of Malcolm Muggeridge *in our December 1966 issue.*

Robert Garis *contributed "What Happened to John Barth?" to the October 1966* Commentary.

Jervis Anderson, *a young writer and critic, has written for* Book Week, *the* New Leader, *and other periodicals.*

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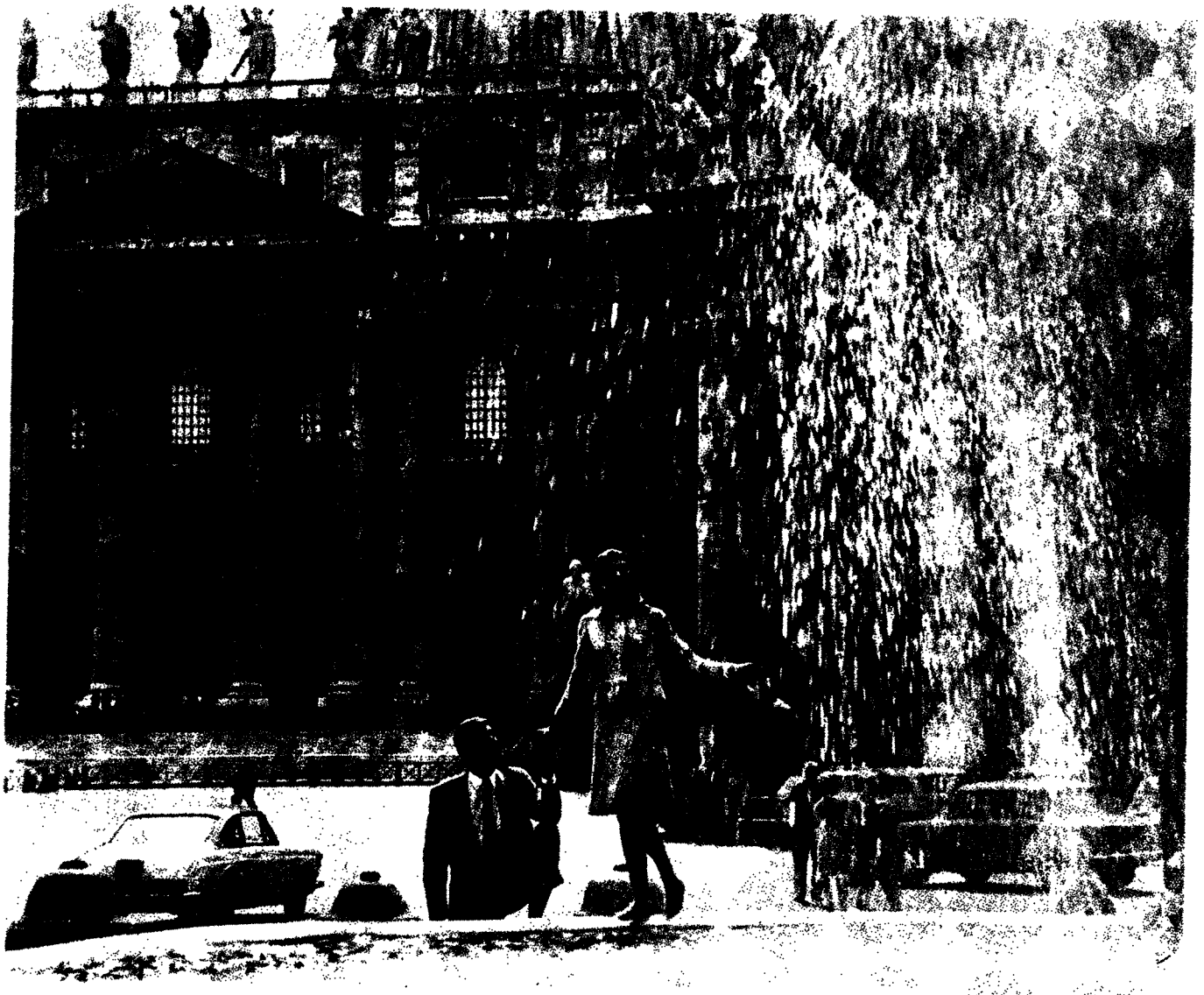

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